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Davis Family

*They Saw*  
**AMERICA**  
*Born*

V.1

Adventures of an American Family  
Pioneering from the Atlantic to the Pacific  
1638-1938

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By

**DORA DAVIS FARRINGTON, M.A.**

Associate Professor of English (retired)  
Hunter College of the City of New York

They Saw

AMERICA

Born

1877

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE  
AND THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT  
1877-1878

THE

1877

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE  
AND THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT  
1877-1878



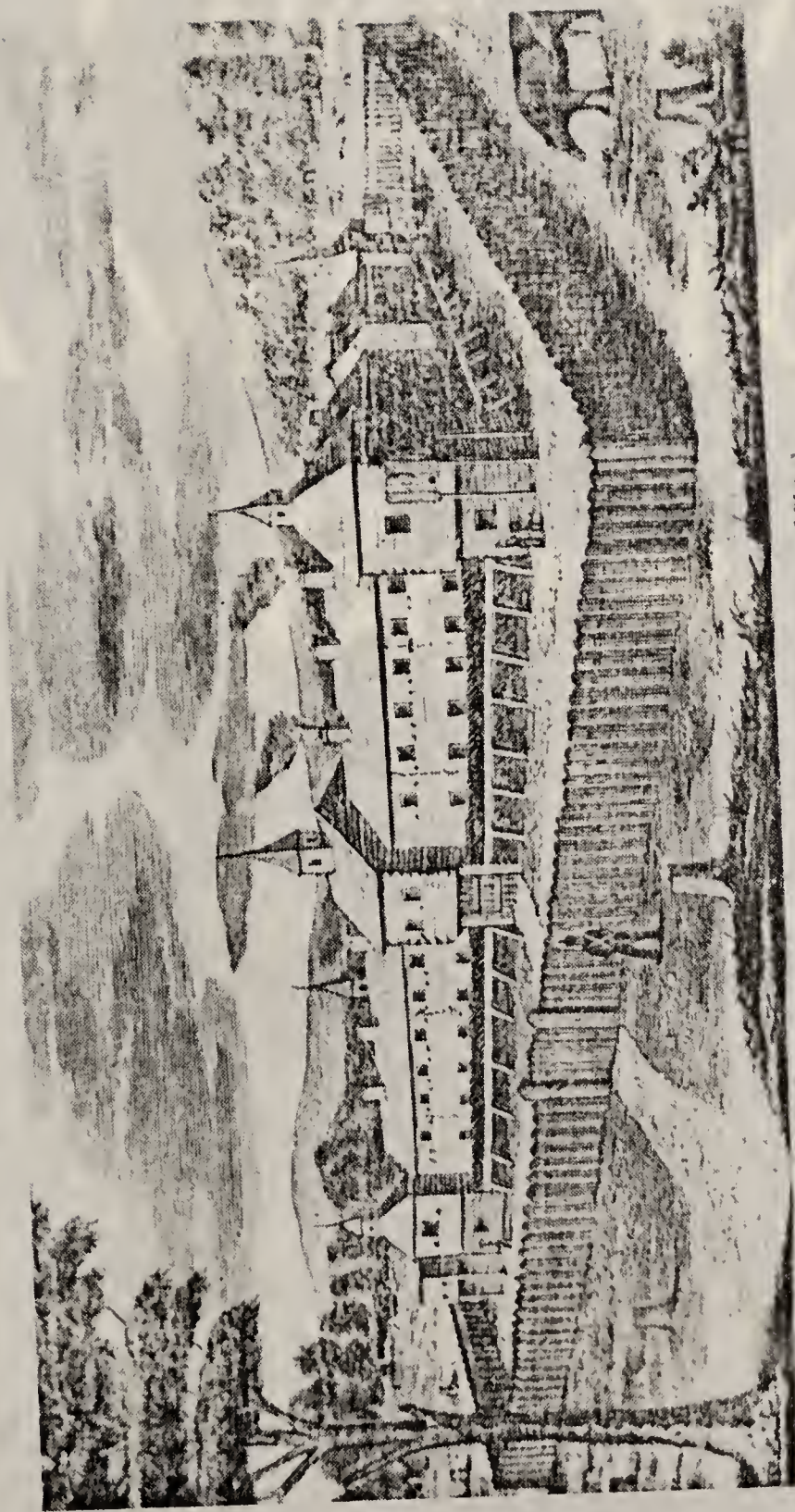
Farrington, Dora W (Davis)  
They saw American Born,  
1638-1938

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GAMERS MARTYRS, IN 1791.

Here MARY ALLISON saw 5 years of Indian Warfare  
before she married NEHEMIAH DAVIS in 1805.





*They Saw*  
AMERICA  
*Born*

BY DORA DAVIS FARRINGTON





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PASADENA, CALIF.

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## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

## THE DAVIS-ALLISON STUDIES IN TWO VOLUMES

## VOL. I. THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

*Pioneer adventures of the Davis-Allison Family and allied branches in twelve states from Atlantic to Pacific.*

*This book covers the family story completely from 1638-1839. From 1839-1940, a selection has been made in order to feature the pioneer spirit and its outreaches. This selection includes an account of the ninetyeth birthday of Mary Allison Davis in 1879, and sixteen individual exploits of her descendants.*

## VOL. II. GENEALOGY

*From the marriage of Nehemiah Davis and Mary Allison in 1805, the record of each of their descendants to 1940 is given as fully as known. Two historical sketches precede: one, the Davis Family from 1638 to 1805 in America; and the second, the Allison Family to 1805. Illustrated.*

COMPILED BY DORA DAVIS FARRINGTON

*Assisted by**Charles Logan Davis**Robert Lee Davis**Elizabeth Davis Alexander**Olive DeWitt Coker**Annie Boyd Young*



America, may stalwart sons

By deed and voice and pen

Unloosen thongs and challenge wrongs

In all the deeds of men,

And fearless fight till truth and right

By honor are attained,

And strongholds storm till every form

Of bondage is unchained.

Harry Webb Farrington

“The present is the most equivocal of all tenses. Men and communities keep alive and vigorous on the memory of a great past and the hope and intention of a great future. The present is only a bridge between experience, which is the past, and the faith and will for tomorrow.”





## To Phyllis Dora

*a descendant of typical American pioneers who, with thousands of other pioneer families, have become the advance guard of America in establishing homes, schools, churches, government, agriculture, industries, professions, and the arts, in communities often inconspicuous and unknown, planted from ocean to ocean. On the personal faith and high moral and spiritual vision of American pioneers of the past, our democracy is founded. From the outreaches of this pioneer spirit spring our great humanitarian movements. May the citizens of today become the pioneers of the greater future, with the faith and courage to forget self in building America.*



## TO THE READER

The heart of this book is a romance of 1805. That year in the Ohio wilderness, a young man from New England, Nehemiah Davis 2nd, married Mary Allison, a vivacious girl of a Virginia family.

What were the stirring political and religious conflicts abroad which brought their ancestors to American shores? What powerful and adventurous pioneer forces in America led their fathers to bring the young people into the wilderness? How did the young couple help build the America we know today where no America existed? Did they teach their children to build? Did their children set as their goal economic and social aggrandizement for privileged families, or the ideals of their fathers—freedom, justice, and equality of opportunity for all?

From a discovery of the answers to these questions, and from a revelation of the outreaches of the pioneer spirit, this book sprang.



## PATRONS

CHARLES LOGAN DAVIS

whose clear vision saw the relation of family history to national history, whose patriotism and sound judgment contributed outstandingly towards the solution of the American Indian problem, and whose initiative and generosity first made possible the printing of this book, together with

MR. LEWIS MARSHALL BRAKE

DR. ALICE M. CLARK BROOKS

MISS FLORENCE C. CLARK

MISS AMY E. DAVIS

MRS. CHARLES LOGAN DAVIS

MISS EVA DAVIS

MR. GEORGE E. DEWITT

MISS CORLEY ECHOLS

MR. GRASSON W. KAULL

MRS. JESSE LEE PAYNE

MISS S. ELIZABETH PAYNE

MRS. RUTH K. TUTHILL

MRS. SAMUEL WILLIAMS





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

FRONTISPIECE: Campus Martius in 1791	PAGE
TO THE READER . . . . .	ix
PATRONS . . . . .	x
TABLE OF CONTENTS . . . . .	xi
PREFACE . . . . .	xiii

## FROM ENGLAND TO NEW ENGLAND: 1638-1798

Francis Davis Sails for America: 1638 . . . . .	3
Francis and Gartrett Face a New Country . . . . .	6
What the Wilderness and Homer Taught . . . . .	11
Glimpses of the Family: 1673-1776 . . . . .	13
After the War, Three Brothers Sail for The Ohio Country: 1776-1798 . . . . .	16

## BOUND FOR THE OHIO COUNTRY

Robert Allison Heads for Ohio: 1784 . . . . .	23
On the Trail . . . . .	27
In Pittsburgh . . . . .	29
The Allison's Land at Marietta: 1789 . . . . .	32
What Campus Martius Looked Like . . . . .	34
Life in Marietta . . . . .	35
As Nancy and Charlie Saw Marietta Life . . . . .	39
Then Came the Indian War . . . . .	44
Kinney's Garrison and Lowell . . . . .	50
At Last, Home and Romance . . . . .	52
Henceforth, Mary and Nehemiah 2nd: 1805 . . . . .	55

## ON THE OHIO RIVER: 1816-1839

The Home on the Ohio . . . . .	63
Hunting . . . . .	65
Family Life at Racoon Island . . . . .	67
Pastures Green and Meadows New: 1839 . . . . .	70



## TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

### BUILDING INTO ILLINOIS, IOWA, AND OHIO:

1839-1879

PAGE

Floating to Southern Illinois: 1839 . . . . .	75
Buying and Building in the Three Counties . . . . .	77
The Squire's Home . . . . .	79
Mt. Vernon and McGregor: 1821-1857 . . . . .	81
The Mexican War: Robert Allison Davis: 1846 . . . . .	92
Mary Allison Has a Ninetieth Birthday: 1879 . . . . .	96
Glimpses of Forty Years: 1839-1879 . . . . .	100
And Schools? . . . . .	103
Asenath and Hardin . . . . .	105
Two Others There Were . . . . .	110

### KANSAS

With Captain Grasson DeWitt: 1858 . . . . .	115
With Reuben Davis—Wheat: 1887 . . . . .	124
With Bob—The Dust Bowl: 1939 . . . . .	132

### ON TO TEXAS, COLORADO, OKLAHOMA, AND CALIFORNIA

To Texas the Becks Pioneered: 1878 . . . . .	137
In Early Colorado Days: 1908-1912 . . . . .	141

### OKLAHOMA

The Cherokee Strip: 1893 . . . . .	147
The Oil Boom: 1914 . . . . .	151
California: 1918	
Desert Pioneering Below Sea Level . . . . .	158

### OUTREACHES OF THE PIONEER SPIRIT

The Indians and the Family Change: 1790-1890 . . . . .	167
A Frontier on a Mountain Top: 1896-1923 . . . . .	173
These Things Shall Be Added: 1940 . . . . .	180

EPILOGUE . . . . .	187
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## PREFACE

In writing of what pioneering means, and of what any typical American family contributes towards creating from ocean to ocean the America we know today, any one of hundreds of pioneer families might have been chosen from the Compendium of American Genealogy. Many of these families present not a typical but a brilliant record of achievement during three hundred years in our country. For the choice of my father's family as typical, I have but one reason to give: I know that family best. The pioneering adventures of this one family have been traced for three hundred years.

Fortunately, from 1784 on, the family is blessed with a wealth of first-hand source material as well as records and verifiable tradition for two centuries before that. Picture two life-spans that cover 156 years from 1784 to 1940, so that my generation heard its stories of 150 years ago from the lips of people who then were actors and observers! Such priceless first-hand source material came from my Great-great-aunt, Nancy Allison Frost, Mrs. Stephen Frost, who was born in 1784 and died in 1892 at the age of 107, with her mental faculties unimpaired. I was twelve years old then. Many of my family heard these stories from her lips and those of her younger sister, our Great-grandmother, Mary Allison Davis, who was born in 1789 and died in 1882 at 93 years of age, with all her faculties alert.

In presenting my Great-great Aunt Nancy may I cite extracts printed in newspapers?

A special correspondent of the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, in a story dated April 24, 1890, wrote:

"Mrs. Nancy Frost, of Lowell, Washington County, O., was born October 22, 1784, which will make her 105 years old the coming fall . . . I visited her last summer and found her spry and interesting . . .



She has been a great reader, has a wonderful memory, and keeps posted on everything pertaining to the welfare of the country. She was as much interested in the last presidential campaign as any politician, and she will not converse with any man long without finding out his politics. She is a strong Republican."

The *Marietta Leader*, in a feature story of 1888, published this:

"Mrs. Frost has always been noted as a woman of remarkably keen, active, and vigorous mind, with a memory of remarkable tenacity. These characteristics she still retains, apparently without the slightest diminution. A conversation of five minutes' duration impresses one with the fact that hers is a mind of unusual vigor, even for one in the prime of life. What is most remarkable is that her memory is apparently as tenacious of the events of yesterday, a year, or five years ago as it is of the facts of her early life.

"She has always taken the greatest interest in public affairs. Born three years before the Constitution was framed, she has gathered the salient facts in the history of the country as they occurred, and is able to recall them with remarkable vividness and accuracy. From early youth she has been a constant reader of the newspapers, and she has followed the career of every public man of note in the country. Few, who have not made the study of American history a specialty, can talk with as much intelligence upon historical subjects as this old lady of one hundred and two years. Jefferson, Madison, Hamilton, Monroe, are personalities real to her. She is intensely patriotic, and withal something of a partisan. As Federalist, Whig, and Republican, she has adhered with remarkable consistency to the same political ideas from the origin of the Government to the present time.

"Hers is a race which has given its best to the service of the country. Her grandfather, who lived to be 104, was a soldier of the French and Indian War. Her father, Robert Allison, was a private soldier in the Continental Army during the Revolution, while his brother, Hugh, rose to the rank of lieutenant in the same service. Both served throughout the War. Another uncle was killed in battle with the Indians along the Ohio River, and her brother, Charles Allison, was a soldier in the War of 1812. In the war of the rebellion,





six of her grandsons carried swords or muskets fighting for the cause of the Union."

To my Great-great Aunt Nancy, I am indebted for most of my knowledge of the Campus Martius period and the Pennsylvania experiences preceding.

The pioneer episodes of this volume, covering in all 12 states, reveal the trend of American pioneering from Atlantic to Pacific. Today, only one member of the family resides in New England, where their ancestors arrived from England 300 years ago, and over fifty members live in California. Today, a clan of some 1800 descendants, wide-scattered in thirty states of the Union and the District of Columbia, the family has seen its representatives go far afield to engage in teaching and missionary work in India, China, Turkey, Syria, and the Philippines; in engineering enterprises in Canada, Australia, Chile, Colombia, and India; and journalistic work in England, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico. Today the circle of citizenship is complete, for eight of the family, in pioneering to western Canada and Australia, have freely and loyally resumed British citizenship. That act illumines the unity of ideals and the warm bond of friendship which unites the two great democracies of our present world.

To many people I am indebted for making available excerpts from old county histories, copies of old deeds, and legal documents filed in county seats in Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, Ohio, Illinois, Kansas, and Iowa, among them particularly to Mrs. J. S. Clark of Gallipolis, Ohio, and Mrs. W. O. Alexander of Eldorado, Texas; Mrs. Albert Pierce for a copy of *Clay Chapel History*; Mrs. E. R. Wallace for Miss Celicia Cole's *Scrapbook* covering family news for about 100 years; Mr. Robert Lee Davis





for the memorandum book of Reuben J. Davis, over 100 years old; Miss Amy Davis for pictures of Ohio scenes, and to Mr. and Miss Freeman for New England scenes.

Especially am I deeply grateful to Mr. Charles Logan Davis for the suggestion that I study my family, for the large mass of correspondence collected over forty years that he turned over to me, and for his constant inspiration and helpfulness; and to Miss Olive M. Jones for her encouragement to undertake this task, her appreciation of pioneering in America, and her practical aid in many ways.

Twice I crossed the United States and once drove 9,400 miles by automobile to visit scenes familiar to the family, and to talk with its members. For the hundreds of letters of information they wrote to me, and for their interest in reading and verifying the facts in this book, I am deeply appreciative.

*The Author*

*Pasadena, California*  
*October, 1941*



## FROM ENGLAND TO NEW ENGLAND







## FRANCIS DAVIS SAILS FOR AMERICA

Butting fog, wind, and storm, a sailing vessel tossed across the Atlantic four seasick months from Southampton, England. Aboard, food was stale, sleeping quarters crowded, and illness alarming. But in 1638 stout timbers and stout hearts gambled with destiny and daringly accepted her cynical wager to reach port, loaded with risks.

Among the passengers talk ran high on the rising rebellion blazing behind them in old England, and the Indian adventures lurking ahead of them in the primeval forests of New England. None listened more eagerly than three brothers, young men all, Gideon 23, Philip 21, and Francis 19. Their thoughts flew homeward.

There these burning issues had first fired their imagination! There they had left behind them a family record of resistance to tyranny. Their grandfather, John Davis, for the sake of his religious and political convictions, had exchanged his native Grampian Mountains of the Scottish Highlands for the liberty of Wales soon after Queen Elizabeth ascended England's throne. There they had left, also, their father, Philip Francis Davis, a prosperous Scotch merchant, who had counselled his three sons to invest their youth in America, and had sent them away with his financial backing and love.

Why?

As if for answer, a speaker recalled them to the pitching cabin. "Mind you not what His Majesty's Scotch father, King James VI, said when he followed Good Queen Bess to England's throne? 'I will make them conform or I will harry them out of the land!'"

"Ay," answered another voice, "and for these past three score years and more our Puritan brothers have fled to Holland and Switzerland until America opened to us eight years ago!"



## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

A flash of memory brought the old, familiar household phrases to the three onlookers. "The worth of the individual! Freedom of worship! Self-government! Church and State ardently to be upheld, but each as separate entities!"

"Ay," shouted another voice against the crash of a wave shivering the boat, "and mind you that glorious day in 1628 when our House of Commons sat for their last session? How, facing slavery to a King, Sir Dudley Digges in agony cried out, 'Let us sit in silence! We are miserable, we know not what to do!'"

"At that, 'Nay,' roared Sir Nathaniel Rich, 'We must now speak or forever hold our peace!' And then, with hearts breaking at the prospect of precipitating civil strife, how they found their voices and wrested from the King his signature to the Petition of Right, like men that remembered Magna Carta wrested from King John in 1215?"

"Ay," came a tumult of voices in anger. "And the next year King Charles recanted! He sent his soldiers tramping into the courtyard of the Commons! He arrested some members! Others he took to the Tower!"

"But though bitterness may best be forgotten, remember this," said a quiet voice.

Startled, the crowd turned towards the dignified speaker.

"When our twelve Puritan leaders met at Cambridge on the 26th of August in 1629, and resolved to buy land from the Massachusetts Bay Colony provided they could secure a charter allowing us to form and administer our own government, they still expected us to remember that we are Englishmen!"

"Our representative form of government has grown stronger and stronger since Good King Alfred's day. Magna Carta and the Petition of Right have confirmed it as shall many other writs to come! And they who stay in England to fight the issue through with life itself—which God protect—are brothers to us who go to America there





to create, under God, the best we know in England and the best we can learn in America. Here or there, the struggle for liberty is one!"

Prophetic were the words. By 1640, when the Long Parliament was summoned which beheaded King Charles, the Puritan exodus had brought 26,000 to New England to settle twenty towns. On English soil, those left were called to action under Oliver Cromwell to defend freedom against tyranny. On American soil in 1776, their pioneer descendants under George Washington were called to arms for "Liberty or Death!"

From Magna Carta to the American Revolution has it been the destiny of mankind to right wrongs. For this, great leaders of these traditions and ideals, and a noble army of rank and file have laid down their lives. The 561 years between the Magna Carta and the Declaration of Independence is but one day historically in the process of rallying all nations to their birthright of life, liberty, and justice. The 155 years between the Declaration of 1776 and the momentous Statute of Westminster in 1931 is but the glorious noon of that day, casting its brilliant rays on the new British Commonwealth of some six free and equal Dominions—with others to come—cooperating willingly to build equality of right between nations in this chaotic world. Nor shall the sun set on this day until in final victory brave hearts and cool heads everywhere build these ideals into actualities.

As the group broke up, the three brothers fell to comparing the words they had heard with the views of their father and grandfather. Typical men were John and Philip Francis Davis, not leaders but the solid rank and file; men of standing and responsibility in their own communities; men of stalwart character and ability, to whom ideals counted more than the property they owned, and freedom than life.

Their grandfather had watched the struggle develop in Scotland and Wales. Their father, born of a Welsh mother and married to a Welsh wife, had watched it in Wales, and





## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

then in Southampton where he spent most of his life. As a result, his judgment on conditions in Great Britain, the dictates of his conscience on the issues involved, and his vision of a new world to be built, led him to suggest America for the career of his three sons.

Nineteen years before, a strange coincidence had governed the choice of the day that Philip Francis Davis and his wife chose for the christening of their youngest son, Francis. The place was the church at Thornbury, Gloucestershire, England, just across the border from Cardigan, Wales. There stands the record that Francis was christened in the presence of his god-parents, Edward and Anne Tayer, in 1619.

But, curious to relate, the date chosen seems destined to make him an American and the founder of the American family of Davis—the Fourth of July!

## FRANCIS AND GARTRETT FACE A NEW COUNTRY

Romance marks for Francis Davis the first historical date in America. In 1649, runs the Amesbury, Massachusetts, town record, Francis Davis married Gartrett Emerson, born in England in 1629. With her parents she had emigrated to Amesbury.

A lovely town it was in which the two had met. Two years before their marriage, Amesbury had separated from its mother town, Salisbury, founded in 1638, and set up its own local government. That was logical, for the picturesque Pow-wow River cut Salisbury into two sections.

To the east of the twin towns lay the salt marshes of the Atlantic. To north and west towered a dark forest, stretching to the regions now known as New Hampshire and Maine, but then called Massachusetts. Along the south of both towns flowed the Merrimack River, connecting the "plantation" with Boston, thirty miles away, and





with eighteen other settlements clustered on the net of waterways around the Bay. Save for oars and sails on the Merrimack, rarely would the settlers have ventured far afoot over mere Indian trails where wild beasts lurked in swamps and tangled woods, difficult for the rare horse and ox-cart to traverse.

Who were their neighbors? What did pioneer life mean at Amesbury in 1649?

Their neighbors, like themselves, were picked and chosen more exclusively than people of any other colony in history. This the colonists knew and took pride in.

Of the first 1000 people who in 1630 came over in sixteen ships—and that includes women, children, and servants—over 100 men were graduates of Oxford and Cambridge, and the great majority of the other men, graduates of the great English Public Schools, famous for their high standards of discipline and training. That original group of 1000 came to Massachusetts Bay to build a religious, cultural, and political civilization based on that of the England they had known. Scholars, merchants, lawyers, farmers, the thrifty well-to-do class they were, about 15,000 strong in the Colony when Francis and Gartrett married.

Sternly the lazy and shiftless were ordered away, for these frontiersmen, threatened by forests, marshes, blizzards, and starvation, had houses, roads, and schools to build, and government to establish. Crops they had to raise themselves and keep food to last through cruel winters. Fish their own rods caught, and game their own guns brought down. Busy people all this meant, always wary of Indian attacks.

For Gartrett and Francis, housing, the first problem of all newly married couples, was more than ordinarily difficult in Amesbury. People camped at first in some temporary shelter like a canvas tent, a hut of boughs, or a wigwam Indian-style, until they could erect—no, not a log cabin, for this neither Indians nor English had ever seen until the Swedes arrived a hundred years later—but a “fair” or frame house. Of course all the men helped Francis build





## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

his, and when they tied the roof-tree to the chimney, the women helped Gartrett cook and serve dinner. Later, all the community swarmed to the house-warming festivities. That was the custom.

Perhaps their new home faced one side of the Commons, a wide-shaded Green running the length of the settlement, and the favorite site for two or five acre home plots, with each man's farm some distance out of town. Not until such coveted sites were gone did one build elsewhere. Central to everyone along side the Commons stood the community structure serving for school and town meetings on weekdays, and Church on Sundays.

Convenient it certainly was to live near the meeting-house! In the days before newspapers, groups gathered around its doors, tacked with notices carrying news of town and colony. Besides local and Court orders, and regulations enacted by the town-meeting attended by all citizens, the men studied the tax rates, road-building and patrol assignments, and drill dates. And the women noted the spinning regulations, announcements of quilting bees, fruit-peeling parties, and other community events. There, both men and women kept track of the rate of exchange posted for corn, beans, and wampum, all used as money. A hundred or more phases of life those doors announced and ruled.

There, too, stood the whipping post and stocks, and from there at night went out the Watch with lanterns, two together, "a young man with one of the soberer kind," as ordered. Even magistrates took their turn to guard the lightless town. "Past midnight and all's well!" would ring their cry, or "One o'clock and fair wind," or "Five o'clock and cloudy sky" unless startled by fire or Indians. Then they beat the alarm drum, or shot their muskets three times in the air to arouse the citizens to action.

On the Green, too, drilled the Training Band, or local militia. However popular the drills for wives and children to watch, they were serious business, ordered by the General Court. So also was the Garrison House, often a private





home well fortified, where women and children could be protected when Indians went on the war path. There, bullets, powder, and tinder-boxes were guarded carefully.

During the anxious days of King Philip's War in 1675-1676, 500 white men were killed or captured, and sixteen Massachusetts towns destroyed or abandoned, and others damaged. But Salisbury and Amesbury escaped bloody raids. These towns always treated the Indians justly. Every foot of their land bought from Indians was scrupulously paid for. Once some Indians appeared before the town officers to accuse some white men of stealing four bushels of corn—and corn was money then as well as food. They were given eight bushels. Though the citizens went through many sleepless nights during the War, and the men, armed with muskets, worked the fields together by turns on the edge of the town, the towns were spared.

But individuals sometimes met a tragic fate. Francis and Gartrett must have warned their children and grandchildren to be wary, for one day in 1697 a neighbor's son, seven-year old Sammy Gill, while picking berries in the woods was carried off by Canadian Indians. Though at once the alarm drum beat for the militia, and they hunted far and wide, the men never found Sammy.

Occasionally, too, a resident of the town was shot from ambush and killed, or a shed in the fields fired at. So agonizing were the stories from other towns, that Amesbury and Salisbury kept alert for almost a century before the Indian danger was really over.

The best known man in Salisbury and Amesbury between 1639 and 1706 was Major Robert Pike, who lived to be ninety. Three generations of the Davis family must have talked of his exploits as did the whole region. "The worthiest, wisest, and also the most daring and fiery man of the times," he was called. From head of the Salisbury Trainband and magistrate of the settlement, he rose to be General Commander of all the Massachusetts forces east of the Merrimack, and associate County Judge.





## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

One day three Quaker women, tied to the rear end of an ox-cart, were dragged by Court Order from Dover into town to be whipped. The constable refused unless Major Pike consented. "Loose them and let them go!" roared the Major. That ended any attempt to compel Salisbury to persecute the Quakers.

How daring the stand of Major Pike, all the neighbors knew. Before that, in 1669, Thomas Macy, overseer of the School and deputy of the General Court, had sheltered four Quakers overnight in his home during a severe storm. His defiance of Court orders finally compelled him and his family to flee in an open boat to Nantucket Island, which he bought for three guineas and a beaver hat. Whittier has told the story in his poem, *The Exiles*.

Then the witchcraft delusion swept the Bay Colony! Repeatedly Major Pike dared protest in Court, where, as a magistrate, he took testimony. Unhappily, an Amesbury woman of unusual talent, Susannah Martin, was hanged for alleged witchcraft, dying heroically. In Salisbury, Mary Bradbury was accused and sentenced to death though seventy-five years old, the wife of an associate judge, and mother of eleven children. After a few months in prison, she was released, probably on account of the social prominence of her family and the denunciation of the witchcraft mania by Major Pike and others.

How deeply these events stirred Francis and Gartrett Davis and their family can well be imagined. Except for their immediate circle, Francis was alone in New England, for Gideon had lost the gamble on the voyage from England, swept overboard, tradition says, into the unknown sea and the unknown grave. And Philip, years before, it is thought, had sailed with his bride to Virginia.

But to Francis and Gartrett four children had been born, Francis 2nd in 1652, Gartrett in 1654, Gideon in 1656, and Anna in 1659. For six generations the records of Amesbury were to carry the dates of the births and marriages of the family of Francis Davis.





## WHAT THE WILDERNESS AND HOMER TAUGHT

Naturally Francis and Gartrett planned for the education of their four children. But the Massachusetts Bay Colony had also planned before Salisbury was founded.

Picture the General Court of the colony in session at Boston in 1636 with delegates present from each of the sixteen or so towns. Picture the dramatic scene when, for the first time in the history of the world in a legislative assembly, a motion was introduced that the people themselves found a college! The purpose? "This college has been established for the promotion of literature, arts, and sciences."

And who were the people represented by the delegates?

Educated men, yes; stalwart men and cultured women; idealists who in England were the backbone of their country. In America, they had become, for the sake of their ideals, farmers and fishermen to secure food for sustenance; lumbermen, carpenters, and plasterers to build houses for shelter; sheep-herders, spinners, and weavers to make clothes for protection. They were men and women who worked hard with their hands every day except Sunday. From sunrise to sunset they worked at any manual task necessary.

For the American wilderness had taught these pioneers the foremost law of education: that a man's dignity depends on the quality and spirit of his work, be it mental or manual or a well-rounded combination.

With Homeric simplicity, America had put them all on the equal footing of democracy that decrees, "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread." America had developed in them the versatility and efficiency essential to produce an individual with ability to adapt himself to any type of environment, and with the vision, social conscience, and morale to improve it. That is the end of all schooling.





## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

America had taught them to become masters of their own future through independence of all outside aid. And last, but not least, America had taught them that their only trust is in God.

And so the first class went up to Harvard in 1638, sons of parents acquainted with hand-labor, whether or not with professional skill. But they were sons of parents who had souls: souls sensitive to beauty of literature in Shakespeare and Virgil and Homer; sensitive to beauty of architecture in the old cathedral towns of Salisbury and Winchester and Lincoln; sensitive to music and painting and sculpture and the great dramatic pageants of England.

The delegates founded a college not to train their sons and their neighbors' sons to get a job or to assume airs of superiority. They founded a college to develop an all-round human being such as the Creator intended by virtue of the instincts and endowment of man. They founded a college that independence of character might blend with dependence on culture, the practical science of living blossom into the fine art of life, and the primitive instincts flower into the inner discipline of liberty, whose source is religion.

In 1640, in order that "ye learning may not be buried in ye grave of our fathers in ye church and commonwealth," the Colony ordered a second step. Every township of fifty families was required to maintain a school teaching reading, writing, ciphering, and beginning Latin. In 1662 it was further ordered that every town of 100 families or over should support a grammar school to prepare for entrance to Harvard. And every settlement under fifty families, or any family alone in the wilderness, was bound by law to see that, through the teaching of parents or private tutor, each child was taught to read, write, and cipher.

Such was the spirit of responsibility shown by Salisbury, Amesbury, and the Colony in preserving all the finest of past heritage for the future. That spirit of responsibility their children to the fifth generation took with them when, as pioneers, they tamed the wilderness and founded society in the Northwest Territory and the Far West.





## GLIMPSES OF THE FAMILY

1673-1776

Just how the family built themselves into Amesbury during the next century, one can only infer from items buried in town, county, and colony archives, items so brief as to be tantalizing and yet so alluring as to arouse any detective flair a reader may have.

Francis 2nd, for instance, when 21, witnessed a legal document of Hampton, found recently in Concord. Thomas Bradbury drew it up, he who was Associate Judge, and whose wife had been denounced as a witch. Mary Weed was also a witness. But who was she? Certainly not romance drew him ten miles to Hampton that October day of 1673, for on January 20, 1674, his marriage is recorded to Mary, daughter of Walter and Alice (Wells) Taylor, born in Amesbury, January 12, 1653. Building a house for his bride on the Pow-wow River, he engaged in farming and lumbering.

But like most men of the colony, he gave close attention to public affairs. Read this record from the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*: "The names of all those persons of Eamsbury (Amesbury) who took ye oathe of Allegiance and Fidelity before Major Pike, ye 20th of December, 1667 . . ." And in that list of 53 names, the total number of males above sixteen years resident in Amesbury, the seventeenth is "Ffrancis Davis."

Over to Salem, about fifteen miles away, the men tramped to swear liege loyalty to King Charles II of England, probably a two-day trip then. The oath ran in part as follows: "I doe truly and sincerely acknowledge, professe, testifie, and declare in my conscience before God and the world, that our sovereign lord King Charles is lawful and rightful king of the realm of England, and all other his majestjes dominions and countryes . . . Also I doe swear from my heart I will bear faith and true allegiance to





his majesty, his heirs, or successors . . . and will defend to the uttermost of my power against all conspiracies and attempts whatsoever which shall be made against him or them."

Rather more intimate is a petition he signed, addressed to "The General Court from Amesbury, Mass., in relation to a Military Officer," dated 1680. It respectfully begged, in view of the lamentable fact that they were "without officer to conduct and instruct them in military exercises," that "Your Honors would be pleased to confirm and establish our choice of our well respected and esteemed friend, Sam Foot . . . to be our Lieutenant who is ye most suited and best disposed person among us for ye place and purpose . . . and his faculty in military discipline."

Did the 59 signers give a dinner in honor of Sam Foot's appointment, one wonders? Certainly, the first time Sam Foot drilled the Train Band on the Commons, Francis Davis 2nd and the other members must have given him a ringing cheer, and the on-lookers must have watched a first-class demonstration of army maneuvers.

The last entry records that his estate was administered on September 4, 1710, after an inventory ordered May 11th. The story behind that matter-of-fact notation, family tradition supplies. On the night probably of April 12, 1710, he was returning from a trip "down Boston way." There had been floods. In the dense darkness he did not notice that the bridge over Derry Creek, at Derry, N. H., had been washed out. He and his horse were drowned. He is buried at Davisville, N. H., not far from the home which his grandson, Francis 4th, afterwards built, a home still standing and owned by the family.

At least one item of the estate of Francis 2nd survives today, a cane he inherited from his father, Francis Davis, the American founder of the family. Of heavy brown wood is the cane, with ivory head attached by a silver band carrying the initials, "F. D." and the date, "1647." That cane descended not to his oldest son, John, but to a younger son,





Francis 3rd, and from him has been handed down to males in the direct line, bearing the name, Francis Davis.

Besides John and Francis 3rd, there were five other children of Mary Taylor Davis and Francis 2nd, Thomas, Samuel, Gartrett, Phoebe, and Mary.

For John, comparatively few records remain. When born late in 1674, he was called John 3rd. Does that "3rd" indicate a namesake of his mother's brother or grandfather? In the Davis family, none since 1538 had been called John, he, born in Scotland, who left for Wales. Not until after John was twenty-eight did he drop the "3rd."

On December 22, 1707, runs the Amesbury record, he married Ruth Badger Jewell, widow of Thomas Jewell. Later are registered the dates of their six children, Nehemiah, Mary, Timothy, Alice, Ruth, and Benjamin. But why did he sell his Amesbury homestead to his brother, Francis 3rd, in 1740, as a deed shows? Why leave the heart of Amesbury for the suburbs of West Amesbury? Did he love nature, one wonders? That he cared for beauty and efficiency of workmanship is certain, or he would never have trained himself in the highly specialized craft of joiner. He lived to be sixty-nine.

For Timothy, their third child, three dates still exist: his birth, February 1, 1712, his marriage on November 8, 1736, to Judith Pettingill of Salisbury, and the date he was admitted to church, January 1, 1738. Does the last date reveal Judith's influence? No mere New Year's resolution was it, for only in a home of deep spiritual feeling could it happen that one son, Nehemiah, would become a Baptist minister, and a spirit of high morale and family solidarity mark the conduct of all of their eight children in later life.

Three of those sons left New England together to pioneer to the Northwest Territory where they bought acreage in the same township. They were Benjamin, born January 8, 1741, Reuben, born June 5, 1748, and Nehemiah, born April 20, 1755.

But before they pioneered, they first had to face the issue of the Revolutionary War, tyranny or freedom! As





in 1638 three young men, Gideon, Philip, and Francis Davis, left their native country to espouse liberty, so Benjamin, Reuben, and Nehemiah took up arms to defend it in 1776.

## AFTER THE WAR, THREE BROTHERS SAIL FOR THE OHIO COUNTRY

1776-1798

Reuben was the first called upon to announce where his loyalty lay, to England's King or to the Thirteen Colonies.

For ten years past, exciting events had aroused all New England! Paul Revere and other couriers on horseback had galloped to the remotest hamlets, bearing news of the Redcoats, the arrest of patriots, the Boston Massacre, and the battles of Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill.

In the General Assembly of New Hampshire, fiery debates blazed against tyranny. Naturally the orations stirred Reuben, Nehemiah, and Benjamin Davis, for their cousin, Francis 4th, sat in the Assembly and the State Constitutional Convention later. The issue was preparedness. To know where each citizen of New Hampshire would stand on the fateful day coming, the Assembly voted that every man above 21 must register whether he would associate himself with England or America. The day set was April 12, 1776.

Two years, that was, after the Boston Tea Party led by Joseph Dyar following secret sessions with Thomas Jefferson and other patriots. It was Joseph's wife, Elizabeth Nichols, who made the dye used to disguise the party as Indians, and helped them apply it to their faces before they slipped from her house by night to the Harbor. Well the three Davis brothers came to know the story, the exploits of Joseph as sea captain carrying supplies for the American Army, and his adventures the nine times he was captured





by the British, for his younger brother was afterwards connected with the family by marriage.

On that registration day, down in Philadelphia, sat another man allied by marriage with the Davis family, George Clymer, listening to the debates which, under John Hancock, led three months later to the Liberty Bell ringing news of the Declaration of Independence, which he signed.

On that April 12, some men risked unpopularity by writing their names boldly for the King, and went to Canada. But the great majority of New Hampshire citizens registered at the "Association Test" as ready to take up arms for America. Among them Reuben Davis signed at Wakefield, N. H., where he lived with his wife, Sarah Jewell, fifty miles north of his native Amesbury. During the War he served as Minuteman.

Nehemiah, too, was a Minuteman. In the list of Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors, his record runs: "Nehemiah Davis, Private in Capt. Moses Whiting's Co. of Minutemen, Col. Jno. Groaton's Regt., which marched on the alarm of April 19, 1775. Served in Nantasket in June under Lt. James Morton, driving ships from Boston harbor."

With the War over and peace signed, Nehemiah fulfilled his heart's desire. In 1787, at the house of Edmund Coffin in Shapleigh, he was ordained a Baptist minister. Perhaps Reuben was present, for Wakefield is only ten miles distant. Ten years Nehemiah served Shapleigh and Acton, now two towns but then one; now in Maine, which became a state in 1820, but then in Massachusetts. Many marriages he performed according to the town register. But the *History of Shapleigh* flashes a more illuminating, though brief, light on his sacrificial life:

"a humble and pious man who, though poor, labored gratuitously upon the Sabbath and toiled hard upon a new farm through the week. He was wont to say that he had travelled three hundred miles barefooted to preach the Gospel."





Back of this meagre record flames an ardent fire kindled from a personal experience of God. That living coal touched Isaiah's lips in the Temple, and he cried out, "Here am I! Send me!" John the Baptist felt it, and was content thereafter to eat locusts and honey in the desert for the privilege of announcing, "Behold the Lamb of God!" St. Paul's troubled heart, smitten by the martyred Stephen's prayer and the Light brighter than noonday, burned within him, and he supported himself as a tent-maker to witness, "I know in whom I have believed!" St. Francis felt the burning symbol, and the rest of his life he trod barefoot to teach the infinitely loving and infinitely intimate companionship of God with all who dare walk with him without reservation.

Something of this vision inspired the work of Nehemiah Davis in Maine, and turned his gaze to the pioneer of the new Northwest Territory, beckoning, "Come over and help us!" Nothing could hold him back.

1798 was the year of the great adventure. That year a deed in the County Court House at Alfred, now in Maine, shows that Nehemiah sold his farm. He was bound for "the Ohio country" of the Northwest Territory!

In the party with the Rev. Nehemiah were his year-old son, Nehemiah Jr.; Benjamin and his wife Anna and perhaps some children; Reuben and his six children, Reuben J., Nehemiah 2nd, Judith, Betsy, Sally, and Timothy. Both Reuben and Nehemiah had lost their wives before pioneering.

Long they must have debated the three main routes leading from New England to the newly acquired Northwest Territory. Should they travel across upper New York by the Mohawk Valley in spite of the warlike Iroquois, and on by Lake Erie? Or by the popular four-months overland trail through Newburgh, N. Y. and Pittsburgh, Pa.? Or, a less frequented way, by water to Maryland or Virginia, and from there by the famous trail to Pittsburgh, the chief gateway to the Territory?

All three routes they daringly rejected. Instead, the Davis party sailed from Portland, then in Massachusetts,





in a boat built by themselves. Not extraordinary was it to build one's own boat, for the banks of their native Merrimack resounded with ship-building. Nor strange was the choice to sail, for New England captains steered their schooners to the West Indies and Europe. The extraordinary fact was their decision to sail the whole way from Portland around Florida, up the Gulf of Mexico, past New Orleans held by the Spanish, and, an unusual feat, to force the boat upstream on the Mississippi and then up the Ohio to Cincinnati, well over 4000 miles!

Perhaps the only comparable water trip in pioneer annals is that of the Donelson family, described in the *Life of Andrew Jackson*, by Marquis James. From Virginia by inland waterways to the State of Tennessee, 120 women and children with 40 men travelled by boat 985 miles, ten years earlier than the Davis party, down the Holston and Tennessee Rivers and against current up the Ohio and Cumberland. On the way they faced storms, ice, food scarcity, and the loss of some of their party by Indian massacre. "A project as audacious as any of its kind in our history," says James of the four-months trip. Certainly the trip of the Davis family was no less audacious.

From time to time the Davis party landed to buy or barter provisions and to shoot game on shore. In New Jersey, the Rev. Nehemiah left in the care of his wife's relatives his infant son, Nehemiah Jr., who, as a diary shows, joined him in Ohio when thirty-two.

How attractive the long-sought port of Cincinnati must have looked with its log cabins and frame houses sheltering its few hundred inhabitants! After resting there, the party scattered for awhile. Benjamin explored the Hockhocking River as far as six miles beyond where Athens now stands. From there he followed Sugar Creek up its narrow valley flanked by high hills, a picturesque vista. Here, as the tax list shows, he bought 100 acres in Range 14, Township 10, Section 7, then known as Dover Township, but now Ames.

"Elder Davis," as Walker's *History of Athens County* calls the Rev. Nehemiah, passed through Marietta up the





green, rolling valley of the Muskingum to Rainbow Settlement, near the Upper Lowell of today. There he founded the first Baptist Church in Ohio. After ten years he took a church at Ames, near Sugar Creek, where, some years earlier, he had bought 80 acres in the same township as Benjamin.

Reuben and his six children lingered several months at Cincinnati. That suited well the nineteen-year-old Nehemiah 2nd. He was eager to raise and sell, where the water-works now stand, a crop of potatoes to buy a gun! He needed one, too, in the wilderness into which he soon was to plunge. He had his eye on a Dickert, a four-foot long flint-lock with octagon-shaped barrel of gunmetal, beautifully made by hand, calling for hand-made bullets of what today would be 32 calibre. Its stock was maple. Two months it took Mr. Dickert to make the gun! Affectionately Nehemiah 2nd christened it "Betsy," and sometimes called it Old Betsy. A grandson owns it today.

When the family left for the Hockhocking to join Benjamin on Sugar Creek, Reuben bought 80 acres, soon added to; Reuben J., 180 acres; and young Nehemiah 2nd, 80 acres, with other parcels later, all in Dover Township, part of the Ohio Company Purchase.

Still stands Reuben Davis's two-story log cabin on Sugar Creek, with this inscription on a tablet over the door: "The oldest house in Athens County, built in 1800. 122 acres bought of the Ohio Company in 1789. Placed by Athens Colony of New England women, 1938."

The next year Reuben bought 640 acres for \$600, according to a deed filed at the Athens County Court House under date of November 28, 1800. He must have liked Ohio and felt confidence in its future.

As Nehemiah 2nd swung his ax to bring trees crashing down on his clearing in the primeval forest, did he dream of the bride he would one day escort there? Hardly could he have guessed that her family, the Allisons, had already come from Virginia to the Muskingum River, near his Uncle Nehemiah's church, and through his uncle he would meet her.







Photographed in 1939 by Amy E. Davis.

Two-story log cabin built in 1800 on Sugar Creek by Reuben Davis, and later owned by his son, Reuben J. Davis. The oldest house in Athens County, Ohio.



BOUND FOR THE OHIO COUNTRY  
1784





## ROBERT ALLISON HEADS FOR OHIO

1784

Why Ohio?

From Virginia to Ohio, over 400 miles travelling by foot, by horseback, and by boat, came Robert Allison and his wife, Elizabeth Phillips of Maryland, to Marietta, situated on a point of land at the junction of the picturesque Muskingum and the broad Ohio Rivers. They left Virginia early in 1784 with their first-born, Charles, not yet two years old. What did they leave behind, and why?

For one thing, Robert, then twenty-nine, left a record as a soldier in the Revolutionary War. Says a communication from the War Department of the United States, "The records of this office show that one Robert Allison served in the Revolutionary War as a private in Capt. Cuthbert Harrison's Troop, also designated 2nd Troop, 1st Regiment Virginia Light Dragoons, commanded by Col. Theodorick Bland. He enlisted for three years, date not shown. His name first appears on the company payroll for November, 1778."

And Elizabeth Phillips left a home of comfort, where, after the death of her father who came from England to Maryland, the estate and money went to her brother according to the law then.

Together they headed for Marietta. Why?

For the answer, suppose we look at the newspapers of that day and the camps of the Revolutionary soldiers.

Was one reason the advice of George Washington, their beloved commander? In the farewell address to his officers, he exclaimed: "The extensive and fertile regions of the West will yield a most happy asylum to those who, fond of domestic enjoyment, are seeking for personal independence." In his earlier days he had selected 40,000 acres for himself in the Ohio River region, and had planned to found



a colony. Repeatedly during the War he told the men that, should the Revolution fail, they could "retire to the Ohio country and there be free."

Had the action of the Continental Congress some effect in voting, at the outbreak of the Revolution, to give western land as bounties for military service? Finally when paid by Congress with certificates worth only about twelve cents on the dollar, these soldiers, impoverished by their neglect of land and professions during an eight-years war, were glad to buy land from the government with these certificates "not worth a continental," as they put it. These western lands with their fertility, timber, fur, and game, offered another chance to start life anew.

Was there a more ringing challenge, perhaps, in the founding of the Ohio Company of Associates by Revolutionary soldiers in 1786? Three years earlier, while waiting in camp for the signing of the Treaty of Paris, 283 of their leaders had signed a document, variously known as the "Pickering Plan," the "Newburgh Petition," and the "Army Plan," setting forth in a letter to General Washington their hope for a colony in the West, their plans for founding one, and their opinions on the principles of governing such a colony. But Congress took no action on their petition.

On January 25, 1786, Massachusetts papers published an invitation to officers and others interested to meet in their respective counties and appoint delegates to convene on March 1 at the Bunch of Grapes Tavern in Boston. The call came from some of the 283 signers of the "Army Plan," now acting as private citizens.

Among their directors were General Rufus Putnam, General Samuel Holden Parsons, General James M. Varnum, and Dr. Manasseh Cutler, a Yale graduate of the three professions of law, ministry, and medicine. So earnestly did the directors work, that on August 27, 1787, the Continental Congress, meeting in New York City,





directed the Board of Treasury to sell to the Ohio Company one and a half million acres along the Muskingum and Ohio rivers. The price was one dollar per acre, less one-third for bad lands and the expense of surveying. But so depreciated was currency at that time, that the actual purchase value was eight or nine cents per acre.

That, however, is far from the significant part of the story. The significant thing was that ideas on government had been forged by patriots who had given not only time and hearts to the Revolution, but brains to thinking through the problems that would confront the country once independence was won. They were men willing to take responsibility for colonizing and organizing the Northwest Territory on sound, democratic principles. They were men with an answer to the problem of how to govern a dependency—a problem which had baffled the wit of the British and caused the Revolution.

These Directors refused to buy the land from Congress unless Congress at the same time would pass a bill afterwards known as "The Ordinance of 1787." Of this act, proclaimed Daniel Webster, "no legislative enactment, proposed and accomplished in any country, in any age, by monarch, by representatives, or by the people themselves, has received praise so exalted."

In that Ordinance Congress promised, July 13, 1787, to respect in the Northwest Territory the most cherished of American principles, later listed in "The Bill of Rights": religious freedom, freedom of man, estates descended in equal parts, trial by jury, habeas corpus, bail, the sanctity of private contract, free education. So, through the foresight of these patriot leaders, principles of government were established in the Northwest Territory that were not even incorporated in the Constitution of the United States drafted and signed by the Constitutional Convention the following September 17; principles that were added to the Constitution and ratified as the first ten amendments. Not until December of 1791 were these principles put into operation for the whole nation, and even then with one





exception, the freedom of man, a non-slavery provision incorporated in the Constitution as the 13th Amendment only after the Civil War.

Further, the compact provided that the Northwest Territory, instead of remaining a perpetual dependency, should go through certain stages to statehood on free and equal terms with the original thirteen states. That principle, won by what became the states of Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and part of Minnesota, settled forever the policy of the United States towards dependencies, and became the model for other nations of the world.

So this was the news of the day published in the papers of Massachusetts, Virginia, and other states! This was the burning topic of discussion in politics! This was the subject of debates among officers and men in the camps of the Revolutionary War! This was the topic of speeches in circles of Masons and the Order of Cincinnati, to which many of these officers belonged!

No wonder that Washington exclaimed: "No colony in America was ever settled under such favorable auspices as that which has just commenced on the banks of the Muskingum. Information, property, and strength will be its characteristics. I know many of the settlers personally, and there never were men better calculated to promote the welfare of such a community." With settlers of such principles, no wonder that Ohio, like Virginia, became the mother of Presidents!

And so, about 1784, the Allison family left Virginia to head 400 miles inland to the banks of the Ohio where, five years later, they bought land of the Company near the Muskingum River on Cat's Creek. And in 1798 the three Davis brothers left Massachusetts and Maine for a 4000-mile trip by sea and river to Ohio, where they bought land of the Company near the Hockhocking on Sugar Creek. Fifty miles separated the two families in 1800. By 1805, Nehemiah Davis 2nd and Mary Allison had found each other!





## BOUND FOR THE OHIO COUNTRY

### ON THE TRAIL

About five years elapsed from the time that Robert and Elizabeth Allison with their son left Virginia to their arrival in Marietta, on November 11, 1789. From three to five months must have been spent in travelling the 400 or so miles to Pittsburgh along an old Indian trail over the Alleghenies, a trail associated with the names of Boone, Washington, and Braddock, sometimes called by their names and sometimes called the Cumberland Trail, all overlapping, though not identical. So herculean were the difficulties that it was commonly said that if pioneers could live to reach the West, nothing could daunt them afterwards.

Nor did pioneers attempt it singly. Individuals and families would wait at some frontier town for a company to be formed with a guide. A typical newspaper advertisement of the period runs: "A large company will meet at the Crab Orchard [a town] the 19th of November in order to start the next day through the Wilderness. As it is very dangerous on account of the Indians, it is hoped each person will go armed."

With but three known taverns along the route, the few cabins on the trail would hospitably invite the travellers to walk "into the fire," and offer them deer meat and Indian meal before making room for them to lie down before the fireplace in blankets on the floor. The exchange of eastern and western news was fair reward to isolated people. But most of the time, "the trail" meant camping in the thick woods.

What Robert and Elizabeth encountered can best be learned from old diaries of the period, written by other travellers. "Saturday, April 8, 1775. We all pack up and started across Cumberland Gap about 1 o'clock this day. We met a great many people turned back for fear of the Indians, but our company goes on still with good courage. We come to a very ugly creek with steep banks and have to cross it several times. On this creek we camp this night."

"Wednesday 12th. This is a rainy morning. But we





pack and go on. We come to Richland creek. It is high. We tote our packs over on a tree and swim our horses over, and there we meet another company going back." Friday 14th. "This is a clear morning with a smart frost. We go on and have a mire road and camp this night on Laurel River and are surprised at camp by a wolf." Such experiences the Allison's faced on the most historic highway in America, "the longest, hardest, blackest road of pioneer days," through a primeval forest of thick-tangled underbrush, wind-falls, and boughs of tall trees so interlaced as often to shut out the sun in gloom. To travel ten miles a day on such a trail was exceptionally fast going, with many rest days needed between.

Once safe in Fayette County, Pennsylvania, they lived near the Youghiogeny River, about thirty miles southwest of the small town of Pittsburgh, until Nancy arrived on October 22, 1784, and Mary, or Polly, January 31, 1789.

Perhaps the Allison's stopped off in Fayette County because a cousin, also named Robert Allison, lived in that section, a descendant of "Long Robert" Allison, so called because of his height, who, probably between 1710-1720, had crossed the ocean from the North of Ireland with the Virginia Allison's. A Scotch family it was, who had lived in Ireland about two generations and gone through the siege of Londonderry before coming to America. This cousin Robert had also served in the War. He was commissioned as First Lieutenant in Colonel John Philip DeHaas' Continental Line, and later served for four years in the Quartermaster's Department at Fort Pitt.

Perhaps another reason for the Allison's tarrying in Pennsylvania was that Marietta was still to be built, destined to become the first permanent settlement in the Northwest Territory. Not far off, on the banks of the Youghiogeny the Allison's could see the 48 men working at boat building in January, 1788, the first settlers-to-be, who had left their wives and children behind because the risk was yet too great. In April they saw them float down to the Ohio on their five-day trip to the Muskingum, there





to build houses and a fort for the Ohio Company of Associates.

## IN PITTSBURGH

Just about a year after Charlie and Nancy Allison had waved good-bye to the Adventure Galley as it floated down the Youghioghenny to Pittsburgh on its five-day trip to Marietta, their parents told them that they were going to Pittsburgh. It was very exciting news! She and six-year-old Charlie and three-year-old Willie were to ride Indian fashion the whole thirty miles! It made her feel much more important than four years and six months! The children asked many questions about it.

On April 1, 1789 or very near that date, as Nancy afterwards learned, they watched their father fasten firmly two long poles, like thills, one on each side of the horse, poles so long that they trailed behind on the ground. Across these two he tied short poles with leather thongs. On this platform they piled their household goods. Then father lifted the three children into cozy spots in the middle of the things so they could not fall off when joggling over the rough trail.

He went ahead, leading the horse and watching the trailer around curves and over bumps. Mother walked behind, most of the way, leading the cow and carrying four-months-old Polly in her arms. Sometimes she sat down with them too, and sometimes Nancy cuddled Polly in her arms. Nancy never forgot the mountain trip, the meals by the roadside, and sleeping under the stars. Between two and three days they travelled over a trail so rough they often stopped to rest.

Pittsburgh was the largest town west of the Alleghenies with about 150 houses, brick or wood, scattered around, and "two dogs to a man," as an Army Colonel put it. Through this gateway to the farther west, a great horde of people kept continually pouring from Philadelphia, Baltimore, New York, New England, and other points,





some in Conestoga wagons, others on horseback or on foot, carrying their baggage by pack-mules or on their backs. Chickens and sheep and oxen they often drove along before them, as well as cows and horses. The last road they had seen was 66 miles out from Philadelphia. Between 20 and 30 days they had trudged or rocked over 314 or more miles of trails.

In the busy town of Pittsburgh people waited to equip themselves before plunging into the wilderness. By the welcome change of water travel they left Pittsburgh, on the average three boats a day slipping down the river, each carrying about 20 people with almost as many horses and cows. At Pittsburgh the Allisons remained from April to early November.

Finally they were ready to carry all their equipment down to the flatboat on which a Mr. and Mrs. Hewlett were also travelling. Tools were the most important thing—the axe, adz, augur, hammer, plowshare, saws—and then guns and ammunition. Food stuffs they carried with them to last through the first winter and spring until harvest—especially seeds of all sorts, fruit-tree saplings, wheat flour, salt, sugar, browned barley as a coffee substitute, yeast, vinegar, and iron pots and kettles. And then for clothing there was Mother's spinning wheel and all that went with it as well as wool, ginned cotton, and cloth. Things that would last a lifetime, and things to use immediately they had to remember.

The last day on shore was such a busy day for the grown-ups that Nancy and Charlie had plenty of time to become acquainted with the flatboat.

"Why, it looks like a box!" cried Charlie. So it did. It had a flat bottom and solid walls of planks built up about 8 feet, with corners squared. A big box it was, about 40 feet long and 12 feet wide, roofed over at the rear.

Along the narrow stern passage-way with its 40-foot steering oar Nancy and Charlie raced, and up the ladder to the roof of the cabin. It made a splendid look-out, they thought. On the fore-deck they saw their cow and horse





and those of the Hewletts, fenced in. Down the front ladder they scrambled to the door leading into the cabin. Inside, along the middle passage-way they discovered rooms with bunks against the wall, store-rooms, and a kitchen with a wooden fireplace daubed thick with clay.

Before they went to bed that night they knew everything Father could tell them about the boat. The four side oars, 30 feet long, were just to take the flatboat in and out of the current. At night they would tie up near some bank, because they could not see to navigate. "But what makes us go?" asked Charlie.

"The current," replied his father. "Now in November we'll float down between three and four miles an hour. But if we had gone down last April, we would have been racing twice as fast with the spring freshet. All we have to do is to keep a sharp lookout and steer."

"When will we reach Marietta?" Nancy asked.

"Oh, that depends on rain and fog and wind," came the reply. "If this good weather keeps up, we'll be there in three or four days. Over in town they told me of one trip that took twenty-one days because of ice and a hard blow."

At dawn the next morning they untied and pulled out into the current. As they watched Pittsburgh fall behind, they could just make out another flatboat untying, ready to float down the river too.

"Oh, this is jolly!" sang out the children, swinging their legs from the cabin roof and chattering about the few hamlets disappearing upstream.

But Father and Mr. Hewlett exchanged glances. True, the beautiful Ohio had well been called "La Belle" as it meandered four to six hundred yards wide between the hills, still glowing in late autumn coloring. But they were thinking of the lonely night watch they would take turns in keeping, with the certain howling of wolves and the possible whizzing of Indian bullets. The Indian news in Pittsburgh had been none too good. "It's lucky we lined the cabin walls thick with blankets," was their father's only comment to Mr. Hewlett.





THE ALLISONS LAND AT MARIETTA

1789

On the morning of Wednesday, November 11, 1789, Charlie's seventh birthday, the Allison children were awake at sunrise.

"Oh, we're still tied to the shore," exclaimed Nancy with disappointment as she rushed out from the cabin to the deck, Charlie behind her. "When are we going to see Marietta?"

"In about three hours after the mist rises from the river so we can see the snags and shoals," her father answered, pinching her fondly under the chin.

Well did Nancy know the danger. Every day she and Charlie had played "Look-out" for Father and Mr. Hewlett, shouting out warnings when half-submerged tree-trunks and sand bars appeared before the boat. They did not want to wreck their flatboat by holes torn in the bottom, and have to swim to shore like some other children they had heard of in Pittsburgh.

"Nancy, you take this fish in to mother," handing her one just caught and cleaned. "Charlie, you can help feed the cows and horses until mother calls us to breakfast," continued Mr. Allison.

Breakfast was hurried that morning, for Mrs. Allison and Mrs. Hewlett wanted to wash and dry and pack their dishes and kettles, and wash and dress the two Allison babies in readiness to land.

Everybody was on deck by the time the men gripped their oars to steer the flatboat out of the current. Toward the mouth of the Muskingum they headed the boat. "Oh, look!" cried Charlie. "There are some men on the bank watching us!"

They looked. Against the background of giant poplars with leaves a golden yellow in the bright fall sun, stood a group of men at Picketed Point. Toward the Point Father





and Mr. Hewlett poled the boat, past Fort Harmar at their left, built on a site suggested by Washington.

The right side of the flatboat struck the beach gently. Down went the oars. The men on shore tossed over one end of a wild grape vine to Mr. Allison. He caught it and pulled the flatboat close to the bank. Then he and Mr. Hewlett jumped out and returned the greetings of the settlers.

"Little girl," said one of the men on shore, smiling at Nancy, "take hold of the root of that tree and then give me your hand, and I will help you up the bank."

"Thank you," said Nancy sweetly. "But Mother says, 'The Lord helps those who help themselves!'" Nancy never could understand until she was quite grown up why father and mother and everyone laughed. Nimbly she clambered up the bank, a five-year-old, for the first time on Ohio soil. Just exactly 100 years later, when she was 105, she related the events of that day to a reporter of the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*. And he published it.

The rest of that day was very busy. Father inspected the cabins built at the Point, while Charlie and she played on the bank near the boat, and mother and Mrs. Hewlett watched them. After he had arranged with the owner of a half-finished cabin, the men and Charlie helped carry their belongings up on shore and set them in the cabin. They did not unpack much, however, because Father said in a few days they were to live in one of the blockhouses of Campus Martius, a fort three-quarters of a mile up the Muskingum. There the Ohio Company of Associates had set aside quarters for newcomers.

Then they said good-bye to the Hewletts, who were going to another settlement. Before the day was over, they all wondered why the flatboat following them so closely had not put in to shore. Later they learned that from a high rock on the opposite bank the Indians had seen it and massacred the people on board.





## WHAT CAMPUS MARTIUS LOOKED LIKE

Robert Allison was very fortunate to be able to rent quarters in the Campus Martius, more fortunate than he knew at the moment. Within its stockade resided the Directors of the Ohio Company of Associates and officers of the Northwest Territory, most of whom carried titles of high military rank from the Revolutionary Army. Among them were General Rufus Putnam, superintendent of the Company, and General Arthur St. Clair, Governor of the Northwest Territory, and some of his family. Here met the Court of Common Pleas, and here in a community room holding three hundred, church services were held and town meeting.

The quarters he rented were supposed to be occupied by newcomers only until they could build. As it turned out, the outbreak of the Five-year Indian War prevented Robert Allison from ever building in Marietta. Instead, history left a map in the Museum of Campus Martius showing today that their quarters from 1789 to 1796 were in the northwest blockhouse.

The fortress of Campus Martius, or Field of Mars, was "the finest fort in the United States," wrote General Putnam, and, again, "the handsomest pile of buildings on this side of the Allegheny mountains." He ought to have known, for he was an authority on the subject. As a military engineer he had built many Revolutionary fortifications, including West Point, the site of which he suggested for a Military Academy. Though circumstances prevented him from making Campus Martius "the strongest fortification in the United States," as he wrote to his friend, General Washington, that he planned to do, it was nevertheless one of the strongest of the time.

Standing on an elevated plain thirty feet above the banks of the Muskingum River, Campus Martius consisted of a hollow square, 180 feet on each side. At each corner rose a blockhouse two stories high, eighteen feet square on the ground, with the upper story jutting eighteen inches





over the lower one, so that bullets could be showered on attackers through loopholes in the floor.

These four blockhouses were connected by fourteen two-story houses, eighteen feet wide, with walls four inches thick, and roofs covered with four inches of clay tamped on to prevent fiery darts of the Indians from setting the buildings afire. The whole, forming one continuous structure, contained 72 rooms. Three barricades surrounded it; one of sharp-pointed palisades sloping outward, another a line of sharp pickets upright in the earth, and the outer one a barrier of trees with sharpened boughs.

Above a tower room over one of the two gates rose a cupola for a bell, sent by Marie Antoinette of France in recognition of the honor of having the city named for her. But the bell was lost at sea.

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## LIFE IN MARIETTA

Life in Marietta was not lacking in brilliance and social functions. On the first Fourth of July all work on the new houses and the new fort of Campus Martius was suspended to celebrate the Declaration of Independence. At dawn, Fort Harmar opened the celebration with a salute of thirteen guns. At noon the settlers met at a table sixty feet long in the "bower," a long pavilion roofed over with green branches along the river in what is now Muskingum Park. Loaded, the table was, with venison, bear meat, buffalo steaks, wild turkey, geese, roast pig, a 100-pound catfish caught by Gilbert Devol and his son, a variety and profusion of vegetables, and grog, punch, and wine.

After a flowery oration by General Varnum, there followed fourteen toasts, interrupted by a thunder storm which drove the guests briefly to shelter in cabins nearby. Among those toasts were The United States, The Congress, His Most Christian Majesty, the King of France, The New Federal Constitution, His Excellency, George Washington, His Excellency, Governor St. Clair, and The Western Ter-





ritory. Though the Allison's missed the first Fourth of July celebration, they took part in many others like it at Marietta.

Almost any event offered occasion for pomp and ceremony in that hospitable settlement, the headquarters of the whole Northwest Territory and the official link with the Federal Government. When the first Governor, General Arthur St. Clair, arrived five days after the Fourth, to take up official residence in the Campus Martius, he was saluted with thirteen rounds from the field piece, the band of Fort Harmer played, the troops paraded and presented arms, and all the settlers turned out to greet their chief.

Another time, when twelve or thirteen Indian chiefs in a pirogue, a form of canoe, stopped off at Marietta on their way to Pittsburgh, the settlers at Campus Martius voted to show hospitality to these "friendly sovereigns passing through the territory of a Republic."

So Colonel Oliver marched a group of settlers under arms to the Point, received their guests officially, and led them back, Indian file, in mud up to their knees! In the inner court of the Campus Martius waited all the other settlers. As soon as their guests entered the gates, the settlers and the Guard in uniform presented arms, cannon was fired, and the guests escorted to the house of General Putnam, on one side of the court.

One of the men present, supposedly Major Anselm Tupper, put the incident into humorous verse, a proof that the spice and gayety of life were not lacking in Marietta. Since Robert and Betsy Allison and the children were present that day in 1791, and must have enjoyed the predicament of a reception committee trying to look dignified in muddy trousers, it may be worth while to look at some of the lines over which they must have laughed.

"Up from the Point through mud in style  
March the red guests in Indian file.  
To find their seats now one and all  
Proceed to Major Putnam's Hall  
Where tables spread in high Bon Ton





## BOUND FOR THE OHIO COUNTRY

With smoking dainties thereupon.  
Another of a smaller size  
With Major Putnam's pumpkin pies.

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The Chieftains eat, and some look sly:  
Said, 'Good big squaw make good big pie!'

The last line refers to the belief of the writer that Mrs. Putnam "was the most fleshy and heaviest woman in the county." Probably Betsy Allison and all the other women helped Mrs. Putnam that day with the cooking.

That food was plentiful in Marietta is evidenced by the record of a visitor en route from Pittsburgh to New Orleans by water. His diary says he was served "beef a la mode, boiled fish, bear-steaks, roast venison, etc., excellent succotash, salads, and cranberry sauce." He further writes that venison sold for two cents a pound, bear meat at three cents, and that he saw an orchard of apple and peach trees, and "cotton growing in perfection." Wild turkey could be had for the shooting.

What that "etc." stands for may be guessed from the knowledge of woods full of buffalo, elk, opossums, and rabbits, as well as bears, wild cats, panthers, wolves, and other game; and fish so plentiful in the river that their flopping against the boats prevented people from sleeping on board. The record catch was a pike six feet long, weighing almost a hundred pounds. But every Saturday night, New England traditions dominated: baked beans was the fare!

So fertile was the soil down even to seven feet, that Nancy used to say that the 132 acres of corn and vegetable gardens around Marietta surpassed "in variety, neatness, and fruitfulness" any she later saw elsewhere. Within a few years, over 15,000 fruit trees had been set out. Because people knew nothing about canning then, they dried for winter all they could not eat in season.

The first winter the Allisons were in Marietta, Nancy said, they used the wheat flour brought from Pittsburgh.





After that was gone, they either purchased bolted meal from Pittsburgh when it could be bought in Marietta, or ground their own corn in hand or horse mills. Milk was always plentiful, and cows were used for hauling, yoked together, with a horse harnessed ahead of them. "We paid for things in Continental money until that disappeared," said Nancy, "and then we used the Spanish milled dollars. We made our change by dividing the dollar into halves and quarters with a chisel."

Salt was the most expensive commodity, Nancy afterwards told her children. At times, it commanded five dollars a bushel! At that, it was alum or rock salt, brought from the East by packmule. Not until Nancy was about thirteen, did a man who had long lived a captive among the Indians bring them great news. A salt spring existed about 40 miles away! That meant much to people often months without salt! Even when she was thirty, salt varied from two dollars to a dollar and a half a bushel across the River at the Kanakwa works where it was made commercially.

Very fortunate was it that the Allisons brought a good supply of flour with them when they arrived, for that fall the frost killed most of the corn crop. The loss hit the settlers hard. Corn was their common staple. "But on the Virginia side of the River," said Nancy, "lived old Mr. Williams, who owned blacks, and had a good crop that fall. He refused to take advantage of us by raising prices. To every family that came to him he sold three bushels at a time, at fifty cents a bushel, though elsewhere it sold at two dollars. Once two men approached him with a proposition to buy up his corn and raise prices for the Marietta people. Bluntly he told them he wouldn't let any man speculate in his crops. He saved the town from corn famine that winter."

But hardships only fostered good fellowship! The second winter in Marietta, the settlers organized a literary and debating society, known for lively and witty debates with generals, majors, and colonels present, not to speak of judges when Court was in session, and visitors from the



East frequently. Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Brown, and Dartmouth men were living in the Campus Martius and town during the Indian War. The intellectual atmosphere was stimulating.

## AS NANCY AND CHARLIE SAW MARIETTA LIFE

Aside from watching the busy, picturesque life the grown-ups were leading about them, Nancy and Charlie found plenty to do.

First there was school. Never had they attended one before. But the other children said that on the first Fourth of July at Marietta, in 1788, the settlers had voted to establish common schools. Charlie and Maria Green ran down to the Point with them to show where they had eaten dinner on the Fourth and where the tent stood in which their fathers had passed the Code of Thirteen Laws, tacked on a beech tree nearby. The twelfth law founded schools. The thirteenth was for them, too. It established a library of historical and school books to read.

Down at the Point the Green children also introduced Nancy and Charlie to the Marshal, elected at the first Town Meeting to keep order, especially among the visitors who stopped at Marietta to buy provisions on their way down the river to Kentucky. Then they all ran over to the Hollow tree, so large that it would hold 84 people. On the way back to the Campus Martius, Charlie and Maria Green pointed out a high mound the Colony had made a park around, because it belonged to an ancient race of Mound Builders, who lived there centuries before the Indians.

The following Monday after landing, Charlie's father paid the tuition fee necessary to enroll him in school at the Campus Martius. A small fee it was for the Ohio Company carried most of the expense. Major Anselm Tupper was the teacher. Everybody liked him. He was very different from the first teacher who had whipped one of the boys so unmercifully, the children said, that their fathers had







"turned him out" in a few weeks. Nancy had to wait until she was six before she could attend school.

Except Saturdays and Sundays, school was in session every day of the year, summer and winter, Nancy used to tell her grandchildren later. "It was the same at Picketed Point and Fort Harmar. The only holidays we had the tenth law gave us." Nancy could recite it by heart.

"Be it ordained that all members of the Colony must celebrate the 22nd February, 7th April, and 4th July annually. Also in proper manner observe the 28th November, 25th December, and 1st day January annually."

The 7th April was the anniversary of the landing at Marietta, the first legal American settlement in the Northwest Territory, the first Territory of the United States, thirteen in number. Nancy knew all about the settlement, and also about Fort Harmar being built to prevent squatters from entering unlawfully and making trouble with the Indians.

On Sunday, Mrs. Mary Bird Lake held a Sunday School immediately after church service. Most of the children attended. If they didn't, she often saw to it that they came. One Sunday, little Horace Nye slipped out to play. "We sat around in Mrs. Lake's room on beds, chests, and benches, waiting," recalled Nancy. "Then in came Mrs. Lake, leading Horace, and sat him down on a bag of meal away from the door where he couldn't get out!" Nancy still laughed at the incident.

Saturday afternoon about twenty of the girls, including Nancy, used to go to Mrs. Lake's for religious instruction as well—perhaps the first weekday religious instruction in the United States. Their Sunday School was said to have been the first in the Territory and the second in the United States. "There we studied," reported Nancy, "the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Catechism, and the Bible."

To Nancy, Mrs. Lake always stood as the symbol of kindness and gentleness, the exponent of the inner spiritual values that illuminate. Everyone bore tribute to her beauty of character. Just before the Revolutionary War she had



come to this country from England with her husband, Archibald Lake. Immediately he volunteered as a deputy-commissary in an Army hospital, and she as matron. More than once George Washington thanked her personally for her services. When smallpox raged in Marietta, it was Mrs. Lake who cared for the sick and the dying. Day and night she helped Dr. True, Dr. Barnes, and Dr. McIntosh. The Ohio Company, as a tribute of their gratitude, deeded her some land. Everybody was happy about it!

Church on Sunday everyone attended. The eleventh law required that: "Be it ordained that every member must keep the Sabbath by attending some place of religious worship agreeable to the dictates of his own conscience." These Ohio pioneers, most of them from New England, knew that human progress springs from religion.

At first, members of the Company preached when visiting the Colony, men like the Rev. Daniel Breck, and Dr. Manasseh Cutler of Ipswich, Massachusetts. He it was who in November 1787 at Ipswich preached the farewell sermon to the first of the 48 pioneers to Ohio and sent them away with his blessing. Then, in the absence of preachers, laymen conducted the services, with General Tupper the leader. Finally, just ten months before the Allisons arrived, the Ohio Company engaged a young Dartmouth graduate, the Rev. Daniel Story, ordained a Congregational minister. So deeply interested was he in his work that he paid some of his own support, and with his own hands built a barge to visit the settlers up and down the rivers.

Since Nancy was too young to remember sermons, what interested her most about the Rev. Mr. Story was that only he and Judge Tupper had the right to marry people! She was fascinated by the young couples coming by foot or by boat from the settlements around to be married. Such happy parties they brought with them that she loved to look on.

And then in Church, it was Mrs. Meigs, Sr., who held her attention. Every Sunday Mrs. Meigs searched in her pocket for her snuff-box, rapped it, took out a pinch of







snuff, and then passed the box to all the other occupants of the pew. Nancy never missed the little drama.

On Saturdays there was always plenty for children to do. Just to watch the soldiers drilling was exciting. At first three companies of General St. Clair's troops were quartered in Marietta, and later a company of the Federals. Nancy remembered how soldiers were served whiskey as part of their rations, and then, when drunk, were bound to a post and flogged from one hundred to two hundred lashes. The boys often played soldier and drilled. They played hunting, too, for every night they could hear the wolves howling, and they heard stories of panthers jumping from the trees on passers-by along the trails.

Then Charlie Allison and the boys liked to go down to the public stocks and the log jail to watch what might be going on. Once a man was imprisoned for debt for whom the neighbors were very sorry. So to help him support his family and pay off his debt, while imprisoned, they used to drive up their flocks of sheep to the jail, and pay him to shear them.

Then the fathers of all the children were making such interesting things with their tools, the sort of thing they said they had left behind in New England or Virginia. Nancy and Charlie and their playmates watched beds being built, and chairs, and chests of drawers. Especially were they interested in a churn Robert Allison was constructing out of a buck-eye log with tools some of which he made too. Little did they dream that the churn would one day be exhibited in the Campus Martius Museum along with a fine ladder-back chair of an aunt's. Then with Horace Nye they would run over to the cabin of his father, a colonel, to see him do his share for the community by making fine shoes for fifty cents a pair. Every recess for a long time they watched all the men digging a well 73 feet deep in the middle of the Stockade, and the oxen treading the clay for the hand-made bricks, triangular in shape. Their fathers made them fit beautifully into the well.

The most exciting thing to watch was a house going





up. There was a law about that, too, the eighth one. "Be it ordained that all members must entertain emigrants, visit the sick, cloth the naked, feed the hungry, attend funerals, cabin-raising, log-rollings, huskings, and have their latch-strings always out." It was great fun to watch the men work as one to raise logs for cabin walls, and the women and men at husking parties with dances after.

Frequently at log-rollings Nancy and Charlie saw Harman Blennerhasset, afterwards indicted by the United States for complicity with Aaron Burr in high treason. So near-sighted was he that, after striking a few blows at a log, he would stop, stoop, and run his finger over the incision to gauge it. After he left Marietta, she heard often of the beautiful home he built on his island about fifty miles down the river.

Once Nancy herself was a bearer at a funeral. She never forgot that sad day. Squire Wood's eldest daughter was a close friend of hers in school and Sunday School. Suddenly she fell ill and died in spite of all Dr. True and Dr. Hart could do. Mrs. Lake chose Nancy, Eliza Ayres, and Maria and Susan Green to bear the coffin of their playmate. "We tied handkerchiefs about the ends of the coffin and carried it to the grave in her father's garden," said Nancy, describing the scene long after.

On the road between Campus Martius and the Picketed Point lived Colonel Ebenezer Sproat and Commodore Abraham Whipple, who in the French and Indian War had captured twenty-three ships, and in the Revolutionary War more British ships than any other American naval officer. Both fond of watermelons, they raised a fine patch with the aid of the boys who helped weed and watched the growth of the melons. But the Commodore, suspecting their interest to be too personal, decided to remove temptation.

While the boys were in school, he picked all the melons ripe enough to eat and lined them up on a porch along the projecting upper story of his cabin. Just to view them would be a lesson in self-discipline for every urchin, he thought. He was strong on self-discipline.





## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

Immediately hot indignation filled the boys! Discipline nothing! A reflection on their honesty it was, and rank selfishness. They concocted a plan to avenge the insult. At dusk one night the braver spirits among them crept up to the Commodore's cabin. A long pole they carried at the end of which they had attached a three-pronged harpoon used for gigging fish in the Muskingum. Silently they started to gig every melon! The rest of the boys watched the road, ready to signal the approach of anyone. No one came along. One by one, down came the melons and as stealthily were they borne away to a rendezvous.

The Commodore was shrewd. If he discovered any clues, he called it quits.

Yes, thrilling scenes could the boys and girls witness almost any day in that town being founded by Revolutionary soldiers. Surveyors at work laying out ninety-foot streets, 4000 acres in lots 100x90, and three public parks; trees felled and sawed for lovely New England houses; settlers arriving every day; soldiers drilling! All in a beautiful setting by two rivers, under tall trees, with magnolias and honeysuckle scenting the air in springtime!

## THEN CAME THE INDIAN WAR

Always there had been an uneasy background of Indian massacres around Marietta and other settlements of the Ohio Associates like Belpre, fifteen miles down the Ohio, and Waterford, twenty miles up the Muskingum. If their colonists escaped, others had not.

Elsewhere about 1500 whites had been killed or taken captive by the Indians before 1791. By 1795, the number had arisen to 5000. Squatters they usually were, who had slipped into the wilderness without the permission of the Government, without paying for what they seized from the Indians, and without organizing a community life to protect themselves. These individuals had given much concern to President Washington and Congress. On the one hand, the





Government felt compelled to build forts to prevent squatters from trespassing on lands ceded to the Indians by treaty, and, worse still, sometimes shooting them at sight. On the other hand, it felt compelled to stop the Indians from killing solitary individuals and families when moot questions should be settled by peaceful discussion. But squatters and Indians were equally hard to control!

With stories of massacres ringing daily in the ears of the Ohio Associates, alertness and caution were vital. True, their settlement was legally founded. Payment had been made both to the Government and Indians for the land. Just ten months before the Allison's had arrived in Marietta, a council of Indians at Fort Harmar had signed a treaty, reaffirming previous land decisions. The day the first 48 settlers had landed, Captain Pipe, Chief of the Delaware Indians, and seventy of his tribe, camping at the Point by accident, had welcomed the newcomers. This land, Captain Pipe had said, was not the home of any tribe of Indians but a common hunting ground. The white people were welcome.

But what if the many small bands on the warpath should unite in a general uprising? Marietta asked.

Robert Allison felt strongly on the subject. His own brother William had been floating down the Ohio in a flatboat with others when stopped by a band of Indians headed by the notorious Simon Girty, an American renegade. As boys, William had often whipped Girty in fights. When Girty recognized William Allison, he shot him down instantly. Then the Indians had scalped him and most of the rest of the party.

Suddenly an attack came on a settlement of the Ohio Associates! Big Bottom, thirty miles up the Muskingum, was taken by surprise.

On Sunday, January 2, 1791, a band of twenty-five Delawares and Wyandots surrounded two cabins and a blockhouse so stealthily that not even the dogs barked a warning. At the same instant some Indians killed and scalped four men in a cabin eating their supper, and the rest burst open the door of the blockhouse, shooting down





ten men by the fireside and a woman and two children. One sixteen-year-old, Philip Stacy, swiftly slid under some blankets in a corner and escaped notice. The two men in the other cabin, on hearing firing, grabbed their muskets, eluded the attacking Indians, and fled to give warning along the Muskingum. Twelve people the Indians killed, and the rest carried away captive. Nancy knew the story well, for years later her daughter married into the Stacy family.

Next morning when the news reached Marietta, the Court of Quarter Sessions was meeting. At once the men present from other settlements hurried home to strengthen their blockhouses and to move their women and children into them or into Campus Martius.

By night the settlers stood sentry duty, crying the watchword every half hour. By day six pairs of scouts, dressed like Indians, ranged the forests around the various settlements to give warning of approaching Indians lest the men, working together in fields or woods or town with guns stacked near, be surprised at work.

One night Nancy never forgot. The Marietta scouts, knowing that all the Campus Martius group was safe within the barred gates at dusk, were just a mile from safety themselves. Suddenly two Indians sprang from behind a log, killed one scout, and chased the other.

"Indians killed Rogers! Henderson chased to the gates!" was the news from mouth to mouth. The alarm cannon bellowed its warning, the guns of Fort Harmar and Campus Martius echoed along the valley, and the alarm bell clanged in the blockhouse.

So soon was it after the Big Bottom massacre that some settlers still persisted in living at home. That night they came rushing to the Stockade, one with his leather apron full of goldsmith's tools and tobacco, another with a china teapot and cups and saucers, another with a great family Bible, and another with knives and forks, and—vanity of vanities—a looking glass! Last of all came Mrs. Moulton. "I couldn't leave the house looking helter-skelter," she explained. "I had to set it to rights first!"





"As if being scalped with a disorderly house on one's conscience is the worst crime in the world!" murmured one of the women.

Many such sleepless nights of wild alarm and confusion they lived through. At the sound of alarm the women at once began running bullets. The first time the cry rang out, "The Indians are coming!" Nancy's mother told her, as the oldest girl, to take charge of the younger children. But so overcome by the dreadful thought of being scalped was she, that she fled into a corner, covered her head, and stuffed her apron into her mouth to keep from screaming. Then she rallied herself and learned to play her part, too. She kept the younger children quiet, though once she had to stand her little sister Mary against the wall and hold her mouth shut to keep her from crying. The men did not want the Indians to know that women and children were there.

But the Indians never attacked the Campus Martius. It was far too strong and too well guarded. They did, however, kill 38 of the Marietta Colony who were carelessly off-guard.

Sometimes the Indians were outwitted. Bird Lockhart, once caught alone, dived behind a tree, stuck his hat on the ramrod of his gun, and held the hat out as if peeking around the trunk. A bullet went through the hat. Up ran an Indian to collect the scalp. Out stepped Lockhart and fired at close range.

Return Jonathan Meigs, Jr., also saved his life by strategy, to become the fourth governor of Ohio and the Postmaster General of the United States. As he was returning with two others to Picketed Point from the Fort Harmar side of the Muskingum, he wasted his last shot at a big snake that crossed his path. An Indian rifle cracked. One of the men dashed into the river and swam to safety in spite of the bullet in his shoulder. Meigs sidestepped the whirling tomahawk of a second Indian, and then walked slowly towards him, fastening his eyes on him. Reaching him, Meigs suddenly struck him unconscious with his gun, and rushed to safety in the river.





The real theatre of Indian warfare, however, was in what is now western Ohio. For settlement of the boundary questions between Indians and whites, the settlers in Marietta looked to the Government.

Even before the United States of America existed, the Continental Congress under the articles of Confederation had been sending Commissioners to various Indian tribes in Ohio to hold Councils, sometimes lasting forty to fifty days, with anywhere from 300 to 1,300 Indians present, representing up to ten tribes. As net result, the Indians present seemed quite willing to sign treaty after treaty in consideration of money and goods, but unwilling or unable to enforce the terms, except in limited way, upon their descendants or upon Indians not present. If some small Indian group, not at a Council, asserted its right to action independent of the majority group, the tribe as a whole took no responsibility for holding the minor group to the agreement. Besides, how could the Indians tell whether the American occupation of the Northwest was permanent? The French and English preceding them had disappeared. So from 1783 on, the Ohio situation dragged along.

Finally the increasing massacres made the issue a military one. In the summer of 1790 Congress empowered President Washington to call out the militia of Kentucky, Virginia, and western Pennsylvania for the defense of the frontier.

The first army under General Harmar in 1790 consisted of 320 federal troops, reinforced by 1,453 militia of little training who, at their own initiative and convenience, straggled down the Ohio in boats from Pittsburgh to headquarters at Cincinnati. Clothing was poor, food bad, and the Cincinnati supplies adequate for a brief campaign only. After Harmar had led his troops over mere trails 170 miles into the wilderness north of camp, so poor was their scouting that in September they met the Indians accidentally. If only 200 were killed and 35 wounded, it was because the Indians were too busy scalping and plundering the dead to overtake the fleeing army. The result was elated spirits for the Indians and gloom for Campus Martius.



## BOUND FOR THE OHIO COUNTRY

Again, in October 1791, General St. Clair took the field with about 2000 of the same kind of troops, the same kind of trails, and the same lack of strategy. At daybreak of November 4, Indian warwhoops awoke his slumbering army. They rushed from their tents, huddled together partially clothed, unable to see their enemies hidden behind trees. So busy were the Indians scalping the 630 dead and 283 wounded, that the rest of the army escaped in complete riot.

St. Clair, asked to resign from his command, was later exonerated on the ground of personal bravery. Three horses had been shot under him, eight bullets had gone through his clothing, and one through his hair. Congress also recognized its responsibility for furnishing inadequate troops and supplies.

By this time, the Indians were exultant. Campus Martius was thrown into indignation, despair, and anger. Even Mary Allison at 93 and Nancy Allison at 107 could not relate the details current about the campaigns, or describe the anguish of the settlers without strong feeling. And they were children when this happened.

Then in 1792 General Washington appointed General "Mad Anthony" Wayne. He met his 2,500 infantry, cavalry, and artillery in Pittsburgh, drilled them two years how to fight and yell like Indians, built roads and forts, and then at Fallen Timbers, near Detroit, spent about one hour in a decisive engagement that settled the Ohio Indian question forever. From June 16 to August 25, 1795, the Indians and the whites made orations at Greenville, Ohio. Then a treaty was signed and peace announced.

Great was the rejoicing at Campus Martius! Out from their forts and stockades the settlers went to their holdings, between four hundred and five hundred families in all. With one exception the blockhouses and buildings of Campus Martius were sold to bidders to be torn down for timber to build homes in town and country.





The one exception was the house of General Putnam. He added four rooms and continued to live there. Today his home is part of the Campus Martius Museum at Marietta.

## KINNEY'S GARRISON AND LOWELL

Among the first to leave the Campus Martius, even before the Peace Treaty, was Robert Allison with seven other men planning to build on the Muskingum about fourteen miles north of Marietta, in what is now Upper Lowell, Adams Township. But none of the colony-to-be thought it safe to build separately while a hostile attitude lingered among the Indians. It was Nicholas Coburn who suggested that they pick out a site easy to defend and build temporary homes in garrison formation. They chose a location on land owned by Nathan Kinney.

There on a tract using the river front as north boundary, they built four houses connected by stockades with each other and the river. Each of the four families, with pioneer hospitality, agreed to shelter one unmarried man, according to an old history of Washington County, by H. Z. Williams. "The garrisoned cabins," writes he, "belonged to and were occupied by Nicholas Coburn with whom Asa, his brother, boarded; Robert Allison with whom Oliver Dodge boarded; Nathan Kinney and his family admitted to their cabin Joseph Simons, and William Davis's cabin was the home during the first summer of Daniel Davis."

But though dangerous to leave the garrison at first, the eight men were eager to be cultivating each his own land and building his permanent home. So, said Nancy, then eleven, "They would take their farming implements and their guns and all work on one farm one day, and then on another's, and so on until they worked all around, always leaving one man every day to guard the garrison. This they continued to do until the Indians quit their hostilities."

Robert Allison, according to the Recorder's Office of Washington County, had drawn Lot No. 14, Cat's Creek





BOUND FOR THE OHIO COUNTRY

Allotment, Ohio Purchase, as compensation for his services in the Revolutionary War. There the family settled after leaving the garrison, on the east side of the Muskingum River where the town of Upper Lowell now stands.

Two historical tablets have been erected to commemorate this early garrison, usually called Kinney's Garrison or Round Bottom, though sometimes referred to in histories as the Cat's Creek or Adams' Colony. The inscription of the earlier one reads:

SITE OF  
KINNEY'S GARRISON

BUILT EARLY IN APRIL, 1795

AND OCCUPIED THAT SUMMER BY  
NATHAN AND MARY KINNEY  
AND CHILDREN  
WILLIAM AND SALLY.

ROBERT AND BETSY ALLISON  
AND CHILDREN  
CHARLES, NANCY,  
WILLIAM, MARY,  
JOSIAH AND STEPHEN.

WILLIAM AND DRUSILLA DAVIS.  
NICHOLAS AND ROSAMOND COBURN.

OLIVER DODGE.  
JOSEPH SIMONS.  
DANIEL DAVIS, JR.  
AND ASA COBURN, JR.

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ERECTED BY THE  
CHIEF ARATAXL CLUB  
ORDER OF  
ANCIENT MOUND BUILDERS  
APRIL 7, 1874



## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

The inscription of the later one reads:

ABOUT 800 FEET SOUTH OF THIS  
POINT, ON THE SOUTH BANK OF  
THE MUSKINGUM RIVER IS THE SITE  
OF THE

## FORTIFIED SETTLEMENT

ERECTED IN APRIL, 1795, BY

NICHOLAS COBURN, ROBERT ALLISON,  
NATHAN KINNEY, WILLIAM DAVIS  
AND THEIR FAMILIES, AND OLIVER  
DODGE, DANIEL DAVIS, JOSEPH SIMONS  
AND ASA COBURN.

THIS TEMPORARY SETTLEMENT WAS USED UNTIL  
THE END OF INDIAN HOSTILITIES WHEN EACH  
MAN BEGAN TO CLEAR HIS OWN LAND. THE  
COLONY WAS ORGANIZED BY NICHOLAS COBURN.

THE SETTLEMENT WAS LOCATED ON LAND  
OWNED BY NATHAN KINNEY.

ERECTED BY  
THE PEOPLE OF THIS COMMUNITY  
APRIL 7, 1938

## AT LAST HOME AND ROMANCE

Lovely and tranquil is the rolling country along the Muskingum near Lowell, with far-reaching views and fertile river bottom. There the people in the eight homesteads lived in harmony for several years. "But afterwards two new families came to their neighborhood," years after reported Sophronia, Mary's daughter. "One was named Ransom and the other Wilson. The men got into trouble with each other. Some of the neighbors took part with one, and some with the other. I used to hear Mother talking about it with my aunts and uncles.

"But Joe Simons shamed them out of it. He was a bachelor, much of a wag, and witty no matter what





happened. He told everyone that he had had a strange dream in which he died and went to hell. Soon after he arrived there, the devil asked him where he was from.

" 'Round Bottom, Round Bottom,' repeated Lucifer, as if in a study. 'Why, that's where Ransom lives! What is he doing? What, dead? Here, boy, saddle my horse! I've got to go to Round Bottom for Ransom is dead, and the people have peace. Wait a second! Where's Wilson? Still there? Never mind, boy. Wilson will do just as well as if I were there myself.' " The neighborhood rang with that dream!

For Mary, or Polly, as she was usually called, school days commenced soon in her new home, for she was six when she moved there. One tragedy she often told to her grandchildren years after. When still a little girl, she was returning home from school at dusk one winter day with several companions. Suddenly they heard the howling of wolves approaching. Barely had they time to scramble up into trees when the pack was upon them. One little girl climbed too far out on a branch. It broke with her weight, and down she fell. In agony the girls saw her torn to pieces by the wolves before help arrived.

Not only did the settlers found a school, but also church. Robert Allison, Justice of the Peace and a Presbyterian, threw open his home for religious services on Sundays. Then when the weather would permit in the days of muddy roads, horseback riding, and oxen-drawn carts, one could go about six miles away to the Rainbow Settlement. A Baptist Church stood there, founded by the Rev. Nehemiah Davis.

Little could Mary guess, when she first heard him preach, that he would prove to be the uncle of her future husband. But so it was. Her sister, Nancy, had married Stephen Frost at sixteen, and now she, too, was approaching sixteen. Perhaps it was the Rev. Nehemiah Davis who told his namesake and nephew Nehemiah—who wrote 2nd after his name to distinguish himself from his uncle and his uncle's son, Nehemiah Jr.—that there was good





foraging in the Muskingum Valley. He found it, and he also found Mary Allison.

Their daughter, Sophronia, years after, wrote: "Father said that after he had lived at Sugar Creek, near Athens, with his father for several years, he left his father's family and set out to make a living for himself. He bought land and raised cattle to pay for it. Since the country was new, his cattle lived very well all summer in the woods. But as his farm was not yet sufficient to support them in the winter, he used to drive them up on the Muskingum River where the country was more thickly settled, and, of course, more grain to feed them. And this is the way he got acquainted with my mother."

On Thursday, April 18, 1805, they were married. She was three months past sixteen, and he was twenty-seven.

Was he thinking of his mother that day? At any rate, in his Bible, printed in 1783 at Oxford, England, he wrote at the top of a sheet his birthday, his wife's birthday, and in another place the price of the book, 18 shillings, and then this notation:—

1789/1805

Sarah Davis born June 9, 1752

In that notation he linked the year of the birth and marriage of his bride with the birthday of his first love, his mother, lost before he left Maine at 19! After the lapse of over a century, may one be forgiven for lifting the veil from a soul to revere the depth of a man's love for bride and mother?

Fifty miles of wilderness had separated Nehemiah and Mary before they met, and a thousand or more miles apart were they born. He had been brought up in Massachusetts and Maine, within ten miles of Salisbury and Amesbury where six generations of his ancestors had lived, and within twenty-five miles of Boston. Not until he was past nineteen had he known the life of the frontiersman. She had never known anything but frontier life though the traditions of



Virginia and Maryland breathed in the lives of her father and mother and their family for over 100 years. And behind both was Scotch ancestry.

## HENCEFORTH MARY AND NEHEMIAH DAVIS 2nd 1805

When Nehemiah 2nd took his wife to his wilderness estate on Sugar Creek, he brought her to a scattered settlement where for five years his family had helped develop community life in their township of Dover.

How large a clan surrounded the bride and groom, the tax list of 1807 shows with its notations on the number of buildings, horses, and cows owned, and the wolf bounties drawn by the various sons of Nehemiah 2nd's father and Uncle Benjamin, as well as reinforcements in his sisters' husbands, Martin Boyls married to Judith, and Edmund Neal married to Sally. When in 1808 their Uncle Nehemiah left his Rainbow Church to accept one at Chauncey, six miles away, the family circle was complete again.

With such a family group around, Mary had no time to be lonely. In fact, with her quick-witted and lively ways, she probably diverted her new relatives hugely. Almost at once she made the discovery that over at Athens, four miles away, a dozen mirrors were on sale, the first lot to reach the locality. Back home across the trail she came with her prize, the cynosure of all Sugar Creek women, treasured till she was ninety-three. She was always alert for new conveniences and inventions.

Aside from this one glimpse into her life, one must infer her interests and her husband's from still-existing records—Bible records, deeds at the Athens Court House, tax lists, lists of office holders in the township, and an old memorandum book of Reuben J., brother of Nehemiah 2nd.





Books and racoon hunts were excitingly joined in that section, for, two years before Mary's arrival, the settlers took steps to establish a library. Some one had the brilliant idea of organizing parties to tree racoons by moon or torch-light, sell the pelts, and contribute the money. The result was the famous "Coonskin Library," the third library to be opened in Ohio. Back east they sent two of their number, almost 750 miles to Boston, the home of culture, memories, and dreams for these distant New Englanders. There their representatives purchased the first books agreed upon by the coon hunters. As year after year the hunters met to count the cash for new accessions and exchange hunting stories, the women, too, must have suggested titles, especially the Davis women, since Martin Boyls was a Trustee as well.

Then the township offices, which the Davis men held, naturally invited debate, in this period when the government was just being organized. In 1803 the State of Ohio had its birth, carved out of the eastern part of the Northwest Territory.

The State constitutional debates before admission into the Union, the setting up of township governments afterwards, consultations with county and state officers, town meetings for hearings on local ordinances, establishing schools and the first State university in the world under democracy in Athens in 1808, setting up taxing and judicial systems, improving mail service brought three times a week from Washington to Wheeling and from there down the Ohio by boat and up the various rivers to the settlements, road building to replace trails and agitation for continuing the national road from Wheeling to Ohio, a project finally begun in 1823—problems like these confronted the men elected to office in the township.

Among these officers Reuben Davis served as Township Trustee in 1808 and member of the Grand Jury in 1809; Uncle Benjamin Davis as Township Clerk for four terms, Township Trustee in 1807, and Justice of the Peace in





1810; Reuben J. as member of the Grand Jury in 1812; and Nehemiah 2nd on the Grand Jury in 1811.

The War of 1812, too, brought the family close to national affairs, for Mary's brother, Charlie, enlisted, and returned home safe afterwards.

Illuminating and valuable, especially, is an old deerskin-covered memorandum book of Reuben J. in throwing light on family and community enterprises. How would one buy, sell, and rent property and conduct business with but 26 banks in the United States in 1800 and 88 in 1811? Particularly if the nearest was about 200 miles distant and many hours travelling away?

Well, Reuben J.'s accounts show that even in the 1830's in Ohio, as in New England in the 1600's, corn in some cases was a medium of exchange as well as barter. He gives a receipt for "rent-corn 50 acres in at 25 and 28 cts. per bushel"—perhaps dependent on quality?—receiving in paper after sale of the corn \$312.50 for the transaction. The "paper" is explained by a note: "August 1835 I have in pocketbook the following papers

Indiana	\$ 80
Bank of Pennsylvania deposit in Philadelphia	10
St. Chlorsaill, O.	02
Silver	10
	<hr/> \$102"

This "paper" he received not only on business transactions of his own but on business commissions from neighbors, as his book shows. Such "paper" he often exchanged where it was issued, as he notes in connection with "Mississippi paper" exchanged when "down the river for 38 days," in a period when the money system was not entirely Federal, and a man with a surplus of ready cash became a walking bank to such individuals as he was willing to lend money on their personal notes.

Incidentally, the adventures and people he met on his long business trips must have made interesting talk in the



family and community. Often, too, his memorandum book shows, he visited old friends en route and brought home news of them. It was businessmen like Reuben J. who kept isolated pioneer settlements not only informed on affairs elsewhere, but educated to the need of local manufacturers, road improvements, and the necessity of state-wide and national policies on these and kindred subjects. At a city like New Orleans, a foreign city until 1803, their eyes were opened to European culture, magnificence of display, luxuries, and conveniences in living. What the eastern seaboard with its cities had meant to the first generation of Ohio pioneers, the Mississippi River basin and New Orleans became in large part to the second generation.

The Bible records in the handwriting of Nehemiah 2nd were methodically and exactly phrased. "Grasson Davis born September 15, 1806 A. D. Monday" was the first entry. Their son they named after the French physician who attended Mary, Dr. deGrasson, formerly of the ill-fated French colony at Gallipolis, a man dearly beloved in the country side around his adopted Athens. The next entry, a daughter, "Matilda Juell Davis born June 17th, 1808 A. D. Friday" reveals his love for his New England mother, Sarah Jewell. For her also, Reuben J. named a son Jewell Davis, afterwards a physician of Charleston, Ill. And did that "J" stand for Jewell, one wonders? To this day the name recurs in the family. There followed the same exact notations for three daughters, Sophronia on July 20, 1810, Minerva on April 19, 1812, and Amazona on July 11, 1814.

Careful attention Mary must have given her babies to have all grow to maturity not only well and strong but united. Wrote Sophronia years after, "Through the wise training of a competent mother we were taught to love and respect each other, and never knew what it was to see one of our number separated from the rest by strife or ill will." Grasson, especially, Mary must have trained to be gallant and considerate of his little sisters, for to the end of their long days they were devoted to him and he to them.





## BOUND FOR THE OHIO COUNTRY

Of the various deeds recorded at the Athens Court House with the signatures of Nehemiah 2nd and Mary Davis, one is of unusual significance. On December 2, 1814 they sold to one Josiah Coe the land Nehemiah 2nd had bought from his father in 1810 to add to acreage previously owned. The next year, 1815, according to Gallia County records, he bought a hundred-acre tract for \$500 fifty miles south, on the banks of the beautiful Ohio River. During 1816 or early 1817 he and Mary left the family clan on Sugar Creek and struck out for themselves where better opportunities offered. There, Reuben J.'s notebook reveals, family love and visits followed them.





ON THE OHIO RIVER  
1816-1839



## THE HOME ON THE OHIO

Eagerly Mary must have looked forward to seeing again the Ohio River around which lingered memories of her Marietta childhood. A commanding site her husband had selected for their temporary home. Half-way down the hillside sloping to the river, on a level site under a tall walnut tree nestled a new log cabin from which a lane, cut through the towering primeval trees, led down a quarter of a mile to the wide curves of the beautiful river just where Racoon Creek poured into the Ohio after fetching a wide sweep to the right. In this cabin, of two rooms, loft, and piazza, erected by Nehemiah 2nd, lived Mary and the five children until the permanent home could be built.

The lane was essential, for the river formed the highway to Gallipolis, six miles northeast, Belpre and Marietta beyond, and then on to Pittsburgh and the far east. Down the river three times a week floated the mail and from two hundred to three hundred flat and keel boats daily, carrying about 20 people each, with much live stock, to western settlements. More important still, grocery boats with red flags and dry goods boats with yellow flags swung out of the current towards the shore at each landing, and stopped if people halloed in response to their horn and ran down the lane to the shore.

But imagine the surprise of the family when suddenly "the fire-canoe walked on the water," to quote the Indian description! Towards dusk the older children first saw it on a day when their father was away from home. Into the house they came rushing with a tale of big signal fires blazing on the river! Instantly Mary thought of Indian massacres as in the old Marietta days she had known. Swiftly she bolted the doors and windows and secreted her five children in the loft. Not until the next day did they learn that the flames were from the smokestack of the G.





*Washington*, one of the newly invented steamboats. The incident was the cause of many a laugh afterwards when retold dramatically to grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Though the *G. Washington* was the first steamboat the family ever saw, it was not the first on the Ohio. In 1811, Mr. N. J. Roosevelt, brother of Theodore Roosevelt's grandfather, had built at Pittsburgh the first steamboat for the Ohio traffic. Very much like a sailing craft she looked, 138 feet long and 26½ feet wide, with porthole and bowsprit, gay in a coat of sky-blue paint. But she remained in southern waters after her trip from Pittsburgh to New Orleans, during which she had a terrifying experience with an earthquake on the Mississippi.

The family heard much of that December 16 earthquake in 1811, for in it two of the Knowles family, into which Grasson later married, narrowly escaped with their lives. While their flatboat, loaded with produce, was tied near New Madrid, Missouri, on the Mississippi River, Reuben and James Knowles heard an ominous rumble that rose to a roar. Suddenly the bank caved in. Their boat was sucked down into the whirling waters of a lake where a few seconds before 100 acres of land had stood. Tall sycamores sank, some, roots first with head above water, and others, tops down and roots up. As Reuben and James felt the boat swirling and sinking, they grabbed the branches of a sycamore nearby and climbed rapidly to the top. Another eye-witness wrote: "The river bed rose into terrible hills that spat mud and strange things long buried. Islands heaved, their trees shivering wildly, and sunk beneath the thick, muddy waters. Above all was cast a murky hue, and the air was poisonous with vapors." Suddenly hundreds of craterlets on land spouted water and sand. The river changed its course in several places in that earthquake and the two following next January and February. The shocks are among the greatest known in earthquakes of history, say scientists.





It was in 1817, with the advent of the *G. Washington*, built in Cincinnati, that the sight of a steamboat became common. By 1825 travel by steamboat became fashionable, and by 1832 one could sail from Pittsburgh down the Ohio to the Mississippi and up the Missouri, and Yellowstone to Fort Benton in Montana, 4333 miles, and from New Orleans to Minnesota.

In 1817 the fare on the steamboats churning past the Davis home was \$75 down current from Louisville to New Orleans, and \$125 laboriously upstream, with the record standing at 25 days, 2 hours, and 4 minutes. Back wheelers they were, with water dashed into white foam streaming away behind.

Ship building sprang up in many of the Ohio River towns, among them Marietta. There, sailing ships were launched bound for Europe. The first to reach the Atlantic had New Orleans and Havana as ports of call, and Philadelphia for destination. It was commanded by none other than old Commodore Whipple, then 68, and named the *St. Clair* for the first governor of the Old Northwest Territory.

It was a very busy river life that Mary and Nehemiah 2nd and their five children saw in their new home, a life seven other children were born to share with them—Mary Allison, Robert Allison, Asenath, Reuben, Sophia Elizabeth, Nehemiah 3rd, and Timothy.

## HUNTING

Nehemiah 2nd often went hunting. So great was his reputation that his old neighbors in Athens County frequently sent for him to come back to rid their hills of wolves and bears. This he was glad to do to see his father, uncles, and brothers and sisters, still living on Sugar Creek.

So skilled was he in hunting and wood-lore that stepping



outdoors at night he could tell by the howl of the wolves whether they were near their lairs or out hunting, and how far distant. Then planting one stick in the ground where he was standing, he would walk a few yards in the direction of the howling and plant another stick. Next day he could walk straight to the lairs.

One day in a cave where he had killed a pair of wolves and five cubs after a fight, he felt his heels continually being nipped. Before he could pick up his torch to see why, he caught sight of four glaring eyes at the entrance. Two pairs of wolves lived in the cave with their cubs! After another fight he walked out with the scalps of fourteen wolves. The bounty at five dollars a head for grown wolves and three dollars for cubs came to fifty dollars.

It was during a terrific bear fight that he broke the maple stock of his gun, Old Betsy. One day he left his two fine bear-dogs at home in order to train a young dog in bear-hunting. Cornering a cub, he tossed his gun on the ground unloaded, better to direct the dog. Suddenly he heard an angry roar and the sound of a great mother bear rolling over and over down a steep bank in her frantic hurry to reach the hunter.

He rushed to pick up and load Betsy. Too late! The bear knocked the gun out of his hands. With two powerful paws around him, she tried to crush him to death. But Nehemiah, though only about five feet six, was powerfully built, especially in the shoulders and arms. They wrestled. Now the bear threw Nehemiah on the ground, and now Nehemiah the bear.

But he was always nimbler than the bear in regaining his feet. Once he pulled out his tomahawk which, with his hunting knife, he always carried in his belt. But the bear knocked the tomahawk far afield. Then rallying all his strength to throw the bear to the ground, he plunged his knife into her heart. With her last gasp, the bear for the first time tried to bite him. Catching sight of old Betsy just within reach, he plunged the stock into the bear's





mouth. She bit the stock in two, but Betsy had saved his life. After that, he made it a rule always to load his gun immediately after firing, and never to lay it down while hunting.

If he were caught in the woods at night while out hunting, he would select a tall tree with branches so placed that he could build a bed of boughs in them. Then tying his dogs to the tree, he would build a circle of fires around it, and climb up to sleep, with the fires to keep wild animals at bay and his dogs to warn him. In the days of famous hunters, he was outstanding.

## FAMILY LIFE AT RACCOON ISLAND

Like his forebearers, Nehemiah 2nd took his share of responsibility for community life in the best tradition of pioneers. He was the third to settle in Clay Township according to the list of the first fourteen settlers given in a chapter on Gallia County in the *Ohio Historical Hand-Atlas*. His name heads the list of the "first Clay Township officers" as Justice of the Peace.

Just who gave the name "Raccoon Island" to the settlement is not known. But how natural it was one can picture with the river as the highway and the Island opposite the settlement to locate it.

His one hundred-acre farm with the Ohio as its south boundary and Raccoon Creek as its west was highly productive once the long, slow process of clearing the land and bringing it under cultivation was over. Still today corn grows tall on that river bottom land that needs no fertilizer because of the rich sediment deposited annually by the spring freshets.

A few years after arriving, a big family event took place in the eyes of the children. Their father announced he was about to start building their new home, a brick house by the river itself! From Pittsburgh the bricks were brought by flatboat to the landing. The site chosen was





about 150 feet from the east side of the creek just where it ran into the Ohio, and on a narrow road edging the river.

A two-story brick house it was, with its upstairs one large room commanding a magnificent panorama of river scenery. Here Mary kept busy with spinning wheel and loom, here she taught her seven daughters how to spin and weave materials for all the family clothing, cut and sew the garments by hand, and prepare flax grown and spun for the household linen. With twelve children now in the family, it was a very busy household.

So close was the new house to the river that the Ohio took the place of a fence on the garden side. Years later Amazona and Asenath told their grandchildren many interesting river experiences. During high water, barns and houses floated down past them many times. Frequently they rescued chickens and stock by poling out on a raft. Once when Amazona was bleaching linens in the river for her trousseau, one linen pillow case blew away and floated so far down stream that she could not recover it. She always mourned that case.

Especially were both girls interested in the ferry that their father ran across Racoon Creek. People on foot or in wagons, along the road to and fro from Gallipolis, stopped at the shores of the creek to ring a bell. If Nehemiah were absent, Amazona would sometimes row the boat across. More frequently it was Asenath who took charge of the ferry, however. So fond of the water was she that from the time she could toddle after her father, she would climb into the boat with him, or onto the raft if a horse and wagon had to be ferried across. She became so skillful in steering and handling boat and raft over a stream wide, swift, and non-fordable then, that the Township people signed a petition to present the Trustees, asking that a permit be given her as pilot. That was an honor in those days.

As slowly the first fourteen families were augmented in that sparsely settled, prosperous farming community, a Methodist circuit rider preached in houses and barns until





finally a Class was formed. In 1833 the first Clay Chapel was built, a Methodist Church about two miles from the Davis home. "Nehemiah Davis," says a *History of Clay Chapel*, "while he was not a member, was kindly disposed to the young Class, perhaps because his wife and daughters were members, and so he lent a helping hand. 'The Squire,' as he was usually called. . . was a man of many good traits." Was he, perhaps, more interested in the Baptist faith which his Uncle Nehemiah preached? His sons, Robert and Grasson, like their sisters became members of Clay Chapel in time.

Before the erection of the Chapel in 1833, school was being held in a log cabin. But immediately the new building served also as schoolhouse. A brick building, 40 feet long, 18 wide, and 9 high, it was heated by a huge fireplace at each end. The walls were unplastered and unpapered.

All the twelve children of Mary and Nehemiah 2nd at one time or another attended school either in the cabin or the Chapel. So during all the years from 1817 to 1839 Nehemiah delivered a cord of four-foot wood for use of both church and school, as did each family. The teachers often boarded around, unless members of local families. One of the daughters of the Davis family, Sophronia, was licensed by the School Board and taught in the Chapel.

The nearest town to Racoon Creek was Gallipolis, six miles away, the third oldest permanent settlement in the State, a French colony settled in October, 1790, under the leadership of a friend of Napoleon Bonaparte. Napoleon himself at one time planned to emigrate there had he not received a discouraging report of conditions. In 1795, Louis Phillipe, later King of France, visited the town for a few hours and in 1825 Lafayette stayed at the beautiful old tavern, called "Our House." On his way back east on the steamship *Mechanic*, he was shipwrecked, and mourned the loss of a cane presented to him by General Washington. Perhaps some of the family went to town to see Lafayette. Certainly they must have talked of the shipwreck.

But family interests went much farther afield than





## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

Ohio. Grasson, the oldest son, specialized in apple orchards on his father's place, and in developing a business of making oars and skiffs. In the fall he would load a flatboat with apples from his father's orchards and those of his neighbors, and float the boat down to the New Orleans market. Returning, he would either have a river steamer tow upstream his flatboat, loaded with sugar, or he would sell the boat and return as pilot or passenger.

On one trip when he was 32, he took his sixteen-year-old brother Reuben with him. One night when sleepy, Grasson turned the long steering-oar over to Reuben. "Call me when you come near the riffles," he enjoined strictly.

But with sixteen-year-old smartness, Reuben snatched the opportunity to take the boat through the rapids, without calling his brother. Though a novice, he got away with it, too.

Suddenly Grasson awoke. Out of the cabin he came onto the deck. So well did he know the treacherous current of the Mississippi that on the darkest night he could tap the railing of the boat and by the echo give the exact bearings. Without a word he struck the side with a stick. "Tarnation!" he exclaimed. "Why didn't you call me? We're through the riffles!"

All his life, Reuben never got over chuckling about the incident.

## PASTURES GREEN AND MEADOWS NEW

1839

The children were growing up! Mary and Nehemiah had been realizing that for some time, as romance opened happy vistas to four of their daughters and their oldest son.

Matilda Jewell, the oldest daughter, was married to Charles Case; Minerva Phillips at twenty-one to Reuben Lionberger, a young Virginian merchant of nearby Benton; and Amazona at seventeen to Thomas Jefferson DeWitt,





of Virginia. The bride of the family in 1839 was Mary Allison. At twenty-one she married Samuel Cole, of one of the early Clay Township families, a descendant of James Cole, after whom Cole's Hill at Plymouth, Massachusetts, is named, where in his memory stands a tablet in the first burial place of the Pilgrim Fathers.

By 1839, eleven grandchildren had joined the family of Mary and Nehemiah 2nd, then fifty and sixty-one years old.

Other changes there were in the family by 1839. Three had crossed to the green pastures where the Lord is the Shepherd. Up at Chauncey, a tablet read: "Erected in the memory of Nehemiah Davis, elder of the Baptist Church. Died August 1823, aged 68 years. He entered the ministry in the twenty-seventh year of his age and planted the first Baptist Church in Ohio." That year, his nephew and namesake dropped "2nd" from his name in signing legal documents.

Then the next year, "on the twentieth day of November, 1826," a quit claim was drawn up and later filed in the Athens Courthouse, made between Reuben J. Davis, "one of the heirs and legal representative of Reuben Davis late of said County of Athens, deceased," and Reuben J.'s four brothers and sisters, Timothy, Sally Neal and her husband Edmund, Judith Boyls and her husband Martin, and Nehemiah. And last, in 1837, Reuben J.'s memorandum book shows he was settling the estate of Timothy, never married, who left a little over \$5,500 for his brothers and sisters.

The greatest change, though, was a new adventure in pioneering. "Father thought it would be a fine thing," wrote Sophronia, "to sell his farm and buy land in Southern Illinois, where he could get land cheap and settle his children all around him. He bought a great deal of land, some in Hamilton County and some in Franklin County, where he spent the rest of his life."

The same family spirit of solidarity, the clan spirit, that sent three brothers together across the Atlantic to



## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

Massachusetts in 1638, and three brothers from Maine to Ohio in 1798! This time a group of twenty-five under Nehemiah's leadership tore up roots in Ohio to transplant themselves to Illinois.

With deep regret, it must have been, that Nehemiah and Mary left behind three of their number. Mary Allison Cole and her husband, Samuel, chose to stay with his people on the land he owned. And Grasson, then thirty-three, had already established himself in township and county not only by making oars, and raising, buying, and selling apples for the New Orleans market, but also by a part interest in two grist mills. So for \$1000 he bought from his father the 100 acres for which in 1815 Nehemiah had paid \$500; in 1839 cleared, improved, with log cabin, brick house, and farm buildings.. To this farm Grasson added 172 acres.

Another lure held Grasson to the spot, as the family well knew. He had met Celicia Knowles, daughter of Reuben Knowles and his wife Mary Brooks, and a descendant of Stephen Hopkins, a *Mayflower* Pilgrim. Her family had served in every American War down through 1812. He could not leave Ohio.

For the three left behind in Ohio, as well as for the twenty-five headed for the new State of Illinois, it was alike meadows green and pastures new, romance and adventure!





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BUILDING INTO ILLINOIS, IOWA,  
AND OHIO  
1839-1879





## FLOATING TO SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

1839

The 550 miles along the Ohio through rolling hills newly budded into the green leaves of late spring must have brought keen anticipation to the large flotilla of boats bearing the family! It was a patriarchal migration! Nehemiah and Mary travelled with ten children, varying in age from twenty-nine to nine, three sons-in-law, and ten grandchildren.

As Nehemiah passed Cincinnati with its 46,000 inhabitants that day in 1839, his mind must have flashed a picture of the small hamlet of 1798 where at nineteen he had landed after the long ocean and river voyage.

Old Betsy, bought there, still laid venison and quail low as at 61 he went ashore from time to time with his seven young men to shoot game for the party of twenty-five. Fish they could catch from the decks as they floated along. But provisions they had to lay in before leaving Racoon Island, for, aside from Cincinnati, the few hamlets and solitary cabins along the river, like themselves, were dependent on their own muscles for food and on grocery boats flying their red flags.

About ten days they floated along on the lazy current, tying up for the night at some bank to cook over a campfire and linger till morning light made navigation safe. During the trip, Nehemiah and Mary had plenty of time to give to reminiscences of the old frontier days—stories their children and grandchildren long remembered. The wilderness had been kind to them: it had given them opportunity! Opportunity to use their brain and brawn to provide for themselves and their brood shelter, food, and clothing—opportunity, the only right a man is justified in claiming from nature or society. The rest—all that cultural rest—is cooperation.



Besides quarters for 25 people, the boats carried accommodations for horses, cattle, poultry and their feed, and store rooms for household belongings, such as linens, blankets, looms, chests of clothing, dishes, silver, a few treasures, and farm equipment, especially wagons and plows. In a word, they brought with them what was needed for immediate use: of other accessories they "could grow their own" on arrival, whether shelter, more furniture, more clothing, or more food. Pioneering had taught them independence, mastery of resources, and vision.

Shawneetown, Illinois, was their destination, the oldest and busiest of the river ports then. There stood the distributing post-office of the whole northwest and southwest; from there four lines of one-horse coaches ran in different directions; there the ferry came in from Kentucky, big enough to carry the large Conestogas of new settlers flocking across in large numbers; from there salt was exported east from the Saline Springs, opened in 1665 by the early French settlers. Once the home of the Shawnee Indians with four acres of mounds rising to a height of 55 feet, it had become a populous metropolis of fully 300 or more people, and the home of some famous men of the time, including 10 generals and several statesmen like Stephen A. Douglas. So cocksure of its future was it that in 1825 it refused a loan to Chicago. "Chicago is too far from Shawneetown and the River to amount to anything," they replied. In fact, as late as 1849 the lake overflow mired the Port of Chicago in mud so deep that always an extra team of horses was taken along by wheat-growers driving their crops to the boats, and in the worst season two extra teams.

But Shawneetown commanded a broad expanse of river sweeping with majestic splendor and swiftness between shores with rich green banks half a mile apart, washing white sandy beaches at the foot of the town. Besides, it boasted the Rawlings Hotel, a two-story brick building very imposing from the river front. And had not the United States Government recognized the importance of





Shawneetown in arranging the trip of Lafayette, our national guest? At its wharf he had landed the memorable 14th of May, 1825, on his triumphal journey to see our country! Up from the front he walked 200 feet over a calico runner when calico cost one dollar a yard. Showers of roses fell before his feet as on he went to the Rawlings Hotel where a reception awaited him. It made talk for many a day.

Later the river that made the town laid all its glories low. Four floods after 1832 warned the people to build a levee in 1867. Even that did not prevent the flood of 1883 from covering the town 15 feet deep and destroying all property. Today Shawneetown would be lying beneath the Ohio as its elder sister, Kaskasia, beneath the bed of the Mississippi River, had not the town been moved back.

At Shawneetown the Davis clan sold their boats, made ready their wagons, replenished what stock they could, and started their trek inland. All towns they left behind them for the wilderness.

## BUYING AND BUILDING IN THE THREE COUNTIES

Slowly the caravan headed northwest over the famous Goshen Trail, first blazed by the Indians to the Father of Waters. Sixty miles they followed it for five days. So rough was the roadbed, Asenath used to tell her children, that after the cows were milked in the morning and the pails tied to the top of the wagons, at the end of the day the milk would be churned to a ball of butter from the joggling!

At the west border of Hamilton County they camped. There and in the adjoining county of Franklin the old deeds in the Recorder's office show Nehemiah bought various parcels of land, amounting to 480 acres, the first entered July 3, 1839, for which he received his patent October 10,





1840. The sale price then was \$2.00 an acre with cash 50c down and the rest in 4 years, a limit he did not avail himself of.

Part of this land he later deeded to Reuben, Nehemiah, and Timothy, his three sons, when they married. Nearby, Amazona's husband, Thomas Jefferson DeWitt, bought various parcels of land around Knight's Prairie, Franklin County, and Minerva's husband, Reuben Lionberger, 160 acres near Moore's Prairie, Jefferson County, 3 miles north. Still today the Lionbergers own the homestead and the deed signed by John Tyler, President of the United States. Sophia's husband, James Sturman, also bought.

To this Davis colony a few years later came a sister of Nehemiah's, Judith Davis Boyls, on the death of her husband in Ohio. A quarter section she purchased, its 160 acres part forest and part prairie, near Spring Garden, in Jefferson County, from a Baptist minister, with house already built and a peach orchard standing. Then, since land was the only capital investment a pioneer could make and one on which both life and opportunity depended, she advised her two oldest children to homestead 80 acres each, bought farms for two still too young to file claims, and willed her own farm to the youngest. She lived to see all five marry and raise families as did Nehemiah and Mary their twelve.

So the Davis clan bought near each other where three counties of Southern Illinois met, a goodly fellowship in themselves.

Many days they lived in the open and slept in their wagons or on the ground while axes rang through the forest to fell trees for log walls, chinked with blue or yellow clay, and to split logs for puncheon floors, beds, chairs, and tables. Six houses to go up at once, with more to follow, and no lumber yards or planing mills to draw upon!

Two-story cabins some were, and some one-story, with piazzas all around or running across the front. Downstairs, flanked with cupboards, a huge fireplace dominated the living room and opened into the lean-to for cooking. Upstairs



one or two bedrooms filled the attic space. Instead of nails, the wood was mortised or held by wooden pegs. Even hinges were of wood and leather, or all wood with wooden pegs. The only iron used in the building was the crane in the fireplace. Picturesque were these log cabins, though not as comfortable as the frame houses replacing them in time.

All that first spring and summer the men busied themselves with building, plowing the virgin soil and planting crops, and hunting for meat. The women, until their new homes were ready, cooked outdoors over campfires or on hot stones. Very busy they kept themselves, gathering and drying wild berries and fruits, walnut bark for their brown dyes, wild indigo for their blue, madre for red, and peach leaves for green. Then flax had to be put through its twelve long processes, and sewing, knitting, candle and soap making done. Even shoes must be home-made, the soles put on with wooden pegs.

Their few neighbors with usual pioneer hospitality helped with log-raising, and celebrated the roof-tree and moving-in days. Later, parties followed for corn-husking, peach paring and drying, quilting, and other activities that lent themselves to neighborhood fetes as life fell into routine.

## THE SQUIRE'S HOME

The center of family life was the home of the "Squire" and his wife. Their cabin he built in Franklin County with the farm buildings just over the line in Hamilton. On flat-spreading acres broken only by a small distant hill, the site was a contrast to the rolling hills of Ohio and the river view, nor was the land as fertile, though good for cattle and sheep and orchards of peach and apple.

For Nehemiah life went on about the same as in Ohio, still with some hunting, for wolves molested the sheep, and bear and deer meat were good eating. But it was law work that kept him particularly busy as more settlers rapidly came and the county seats became centers of activity. In





pioneer days it devolved upon men of sound sense and balanced judgment to read law and adjudicate disputes between neighbors. He served as Justice of the Peace until passing on at 76.

But Mary found for brains and hands new work, medical practice, that took her far afield in three counties. At that time medical knowledge and skill were usually the responsibility of keen minds gifted with observation, steady nerves, tactful patience, common sense, and warm sympathy. Mary possessed all these traits together with experience in caring for her 12 children and many grandchildren.

Back in Ohio she had discovered her rare gift when 40. Here in Illinois when a call came, she would leap lightly from the ground to the saddle of her pony and ride off with her wicker basket. In over 1000 cases of childbirth her records, carefully kept for 50 years, show that she never lost a case. Even until 90 she was summoned to help with illness. She was deeply beloved over the whole countryside.

The home of Nehemiah and Mary Davis was the home of typical American pioneers with an eastern background of culture and the western courage to work with hand and brain at whatever task of adjustment the wilderness and the establishment of community life might present. The versatility demanded of pioneers was the elemental versatility demanded in the Homeric days and the days of Beowulf. It ran the gamut from the clearing and cultivation of the land, through mechanical and trade skill in building homes and constructing machinery, to the social sciences of law, medicine, public health, the ministry, teaching and public office, and on to the arts of painting, acting, music, and writing. That versatility appears in their children. It is the fruit of free minds who have found themselves in service to home, community, and nation, knowing that difficulties are meant to be surmounted and ideals to be translated into realities.

Their home stood for more than all that. It stood for an active faith in God. Before churches were built, their house was thrown open to "protracted meetings" of three





or four days, when neighbors came from miles around to sleep in barns and tent and attic, to eat at long tables in the open, and to listen to preaching. Because of their moral and spiritual insight into the laws of living and their experience of a Power greater than themselves, democracy was safe in their hands. For the essence of democracy is a spirit that pays homage to an inner sense of law and order, an outer challenge of responsibility voluntarily assumed, an impulse to grow to full capacity, a love of human beings, and a reverence for God.

## MT. VERNON AND MCGREGOR

1821-1857

When Downing Baugh left his native Kentucky for Illinois in 1820, he found it virgin soil. Bears roamed frequently along the water courses in the heavy timber. Deer grazed in herds of from fifty to one hundred together. Their flesh furnished food and their hides clothing as well as a medium of exchange. Later, when licensed as a merchant in 1831, he used to send the hides and skins by the hundreds to the great fur-trading center of St. Louis. Wolves, dangerous to men only when hungry, and panthers and wild cats raided the sheep and hogs.

Plenty of time Downing had to observe all this as he left the great highway of his day, the Mississippi, at Fort Kaskasia below St. Louis for Mt. Vernon, 75 miles away. Three days he travelled along the winding trail over prairie tracts with grass to his shoulders and twice as often through well-timbered land with only a rare log cabin visible. Picturesque the Jefferson County seat of Mt. Vernon must have looked to Downing as in 1821 he entered it in all its glory of perhaps eighteen or twenty new log-cabins clustered under towering trees around the central square with its court-house, itself a log cabin, boasting a fireplace and one window.



## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

From Mt. Vernon trails led to little Benton, the Franklin County seat, to smaller McLeansboro, the Hamilton County seat, and to proud Shawneetown, 100 miles southeast on the Ohio. Vandalia, the next largest town, lay 65 miles north, the State capital from the time Illinois achieved statehood in 1820 until in 1837 Abraham Lincoln eloquently argued to move the capital to Springfield, still farther north. Lincoln was then the representative of New Salem, a log-cabin community with never more than 25 homes or 100 people, but a saw-mill center promising the making of an enterprising city. Today its very site would have disappeared had not Illinois, with historic foresight, made of it a State park, rebuilt 19 cabins, and furnished them with pioneer equipment to embosom a village of 1836 in the twentieth century. Such was the Illinois scene when Downing Baugh reached Mt. Vernon.

Taking an interest in politics, he became postmaster, and in 1840-1841 "enrolling and engrossing clerk" of the 12th General Assembly of the State of Illinois at Springfield. There he often saw Lincoln. At the same time he was managing his merchandise store to support his wife, Millie Pace, and their eight children, and studying law at home by night. So avid a student and reader was he that on March 20, 1843 he took the oath to execute the duties of Attorney and Counsellor of Law.

But even before then his connection with court houses had begun. For some years Mt. Vernon had not been a bit proud of its second courthouse, a brick building, slightly larger than its first log one, but so dilapidated that the settlers vowed it would fall down anytime. It was not in keeping with the stately frame houses replacing the log cabins around the square and the settled charm of southern hospitality. Petitions for a new building had won no favor at Vandalia or Springfield.

Then mysteriously in 1839, "after a calm, still night," so the records run, the courthouse that had withstood many winter storms was discovered in the morning to have fallen partly down with a hole in it big enough to drive a wagon





through! Nobody heard it fall! Nobody knew how it happened! Nobody cared! Instead, with whoops and hollas, the whole town turned out to see that the job was thorough! Ropes were run into one window and out another. Everybody caught hold of the pulling end to have a hand in the frolic. Amid shouts and yells down came the courthouse in an ignominious pile of rubbish! "The town was full of dust and noise and fun" ran the weekly paper account.

So when the newspapers published a notice for sealed bids to erect a new brick courthouse, on the Commission of five men was the name of Downing Baugh. Obviously the authorities, however mysterious the incident, justly deemed Downing Baugh, Justice of the Peace of Mt. Vernon, a man whose reputation could not be impugned; and obviously the citizens admired his enterprise and initiative—and obviously both sides were right! So outstanding as a lawyer did he become that on Aug. 11, 1854 he was appointed Judge of the Court for the 12th Judicial Circuit by Joel A. Matteson, Governor of Illinois, and later Probate Judge. His whole record was honest and upright.

The establishment of law and order was not the only activity foremost in the minds of the substantial men and women who took responsibility for developing, in the wilderness, communities worthy to become part of the United States of America they loved, and for which their forebears had fought in the wars of the Revolution and 1812. Part of their conviction, as well as training and experience in the older sections whence they came, was that the only genuine source of freedom, law, and order, and the only true fountain of democracy, is love of God and man.

The pioneers of Christianity in the County were the Methodist circuit riders on horseback. As early as 1819, just two years after the first settlers came to Jefferson County, they appeared to aid the services being held by settlers in private houses, or under the trees in some grove if the weather permitted.

Downing Baugh was one of the Methodist adherents. So numerous did they become that on September 8, 1835





## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

he signed a deed, as one of seven trustees, for Lot No. 1, Block 19, in Mt. Vernon. A small building they put up, with a preacher present only once a month, and janitorial responsibility for building the fire and sweeping the floor undertaken by the first person to arrive on a Sunday morning.

Unfortunately, the poorly seasoned roof warped so that rain and snow came through. Though naturally uncomfortable for the congregation, it was also on occasion a source of embarrassment. Dogs often accompanied their masters into the building, as in old colonial days, and were not always as understanding and sympathetic as their owners.

Downing Baugh's dog was no exception. Particularly he had a mortal hatred for one McKay, a tall lank fellow. One Sunday morning both were in Church when the snow was melting through the roof, bringing down chunks of plaster. Baugh's dog held McKay responsible. As the first chunk crashed, up he jumped, bristling and growling in the direction of McKay. At the second racket he barked furiously to warn McKay. At the third chunk, over and under the backless benches he leaped in McKay's direction, as McKay's long legs leaped ahead making for the door. "It almost broke up the meeting for the people smiled very loud," reads the report.

The incident doubtless had a bearing on repairs to the structure soon undertaken, with a belfry added. In 1853 Judge Baugh again signed a deed with others, this time for four lots now the present site of the Methodist Church in Mt. Vernon, not far from the Square.

In an early history of Jefferson County runs the statement, "Downing Baugh was the first School Commissioner of whom we have any account, and was appointed in 1836." Drafted to develop the schools of the County, he naturally heard of the coming of Sophronia Davis three years later, a teacher from Ohio well qualified for her work. Soon her reputation spread throughout the section not only for ability but for cool courage.

Once just before dismissal time she happened to glance out of the window of her log cabin school building just in



time to see a copperhead crawl under the puncheon floor. Quickly she gave directions to the older boys how to raise the puncheon logs of the floor, find the snake, and kill it before she allowed the children outside the building. Snakes were such a menace to children in early Illinois days that before building a school the men usually held a snake hunt around the proposed site. At one such hunt at Shiloh in 1820, 500 rattlers, copperheads, vipers, adders, and moccasins were killed.

Sophronia was a Methodist, too, and very active in community affairs. Not strange was it, then, that after the death of his first wife, Downing Baugh married Sophronia on November 11, 1846 at the home of her parents, with the Rev. John Van Cleve officiating. He was 48 and she was 36.

After eleven years of busy, smooth-flowing life in Mt. Vernon, again came the call to pioneer. Iowa calling! The year, 1857!

1857 saw the railroad finished from Cincinnati to Illinoistown, now East St. Louis. From there passengers ferried across the Mississippi to St. Louis. June 4, 1857 marked the great celebration when for the first time in American history a passenger could go by train from the Atlantic to the Mississippi! To be sure, he travelled over three railroads at inconvenience and delay at terminals. But it could be done! At 6 A.M. the first train of the newly finished last railroad section left Cincinnati and reached St. Louis by midnight the same day, 345 miles in 18 hours. The passengers were banqueted at Vincennes in Indiana and welcomed at the Illinois border by Governor Reynolds. How extraordinary this achievement, all the people along the route knew!

"Shortly after 6 o'clock," wrote one of the passengers in a newspaper letter of the day, "we got well under way, and were whirled along at a rapid rate for about 15 miles . . . when pumps of the engine gave out . . . In a half-hour we speedily made repairs . . . Extra locomotives were passed at convenient points along the line with steam up, fretting to be free, ready to take the place of any





disabled . . . Flagmen each mile watched the track closely to signalize the train should any danger present itself . . . A jubilant feeling prevailed along the route . . . Cannon were discharged . . . Flags were displayed . . . The country was one never wearying monotony of living green, rich, deep, and dark . . . beautiful prairies plentifully interspersed with groves of timber watered by many small streams . . . In the night . . . houses were illuminated at the various towns wherever they had candles, and where they had not, tar barrels were burned instead. The inhabitants turned out en masse, men, women, children, and babies."

That summer saw Judge Baugh take the train with his wife, and their eight-year-old daughter, Judith, for St. Louis. There they embarked on a Mississippi River boat for a 400-mile trip northward to McGregor, Iowa.

McGregor in 1857 was booming with all the promise of a great inland metropolis. A ferry linked the town to the Wisconsin shore at Prairie de Chien, a name to conjure with since the famous old fur-trading days of the Hudson Bay Company and the Astor Company whose warehouses still stand there. There stood Fort Crawford, built in 1816, with its Army officers socially entertained in the sumptuous homes of the old French families of Dubuque, Giard, Rolette, and Dousman. There, too, another railroad branch ran eastward, opening up vistas of immense trade and transportation.

On the McGregor side, miles of teams from the inland prairies waited their turn to wind their way down the steep bluffs to the water-front, there to discharge their cargo for train east or steamboat north and south. From the McGregor docks Diamond Joe Reynolds ran his steamboats up and down the river, crowded with freight, packed with lumber and grain, and gay with passengers who might either do their own cooking on board or buy their meals.

Fishermen in the shoals and channels of the many islands lying at that point in the river were searching for pearls in the oyster beds, a livelihood so widely advertised that a pearl-rush was on like later rushes to gold fields!





All around McGregor was the stir of construction and business, with legal work to be done.

A picturesque town as the Baughs saw it for the first time that summer day! Its one long street running for a mile or so parallel to the River shied away from it to avoid its floods, only to face the dashing avalanches of water that rushed down the steep, forested bluffs overshadowing the town, when storms raged on the heights above. So violently tumbled the water down the hills after a thunderstorm that people were frequently swept off their feet on the main street, and crates and boxes of merchandise, left by chance on the sidewalks, whirled down into the river. Today, three dams in the ravines behind the town tame the waters, and a 9-foot deep 12-foot wide ditch, running behind stores and houses of the long street, guides the torrent.

On a side trail leading from the main street uphill towards the heights, Judge Baugh built a house in the forest on land going back to the French crown patents of the Dubuques and Giards. He who built his house on the open prairies on the heights above was accounted daring in those days. To be sure, 23 settlers soon went up. But they compromised by buying a "woods" along a ravine for their fuel protection. To this day their descendants to the third generation hold that "woods" inviolate. Prairie fires, Indians, and winter blasts, threatened their lives up there.

On one promontory commanding the river, Zebulon Pike, that doughty descendant of the old Amesbury Roger Pike, vainly recommended in 1805 that the Government build a fort. Instead, Fort Crawford was built across the river. From Zebulon Pike's Hill, as today it is called, there spreads out a panorama of the river with its isles, the prairie across on the Wisconsin side, and the mouth of the Wisconsin River down which floated Father Marquette and Joliet, illustrious explorers of deep spiritual vision, there to see for the first time the mighty Mississippi.

Always the townspeople were river-conscious. Well they might be for life and income were at stake! At that period the great inland states from the upper reaches of the Ohio





where Marietta and Wheeling stand, to the great reaches of the Missouri River far up the Yellowstone River into Montana, and on north to the Canadian border where the Mississippi pours from fir-bound Lake Itasca, to the moss-draped live oaks of Louisiana—all were dominated by the River with its 300 steamboats plying those waters from 1809 until the significance of that train whistle in 1857 finally awoke them to their doom, and the waters sobbed themselves quiet in a lonely sleep.

When Downing Baugh built his house in McGregor and hung up his shingle under the firm name Baugh and Stoneman, the town was just eight years old. Five years after his arrival he was elected judge by the people and commissioned in consequence May 6, 1862 by the Hon. Samuel J. Kirkland, Governor of Iowa. His duties as an officer of the Internal Bureau in 1866-1867 for the County of Clayton also kept him busy.

Though rushed with legal work, he always found time to undergird the community spiritually. He and his wife became charter members of the Methodist Church. Every Sunday, whatever the weather, found him seated in the Amen corner at one side of the pulpit as a Steward of the Church should in those days. In the opposite Amen corner sat the other Steward. Together they supported the preacher's long prayer by antiphonal shouts. A loud "Amen" from one corner would ring to the rafters in answer to the "Hallelujah" from the opposite corner, and "Praise the Lord" answer "Glory" from the other side. Engrossed in fervent exultation he knelt, oblivious to his little granddaughter kneeling beside him, hiding low behind the high pew-back to conceal from the congregation her blushes of embarrassment. In his home life and worship he was equally consistent. Every day opened and closed with family prayer.

His wife Sophronia ably seconded his home and public life. Theirs was a hospitality prodigal even in a pioneer community where it was common for a dozen or more to drop in after morning service, unannounced for dinner. Too prodigal, the children thought! For two generations





that tradition of hospitality lasted, and for two generations the children and grandchildren, as they helped behind the scenes and watched the guests come and go, would tip each other off beneath the breath with the magic initials, "i.g." and "n.g.," "ideal guest" and "no good"!

At times, Sophronia's tact was required too, as in the Civil War. When the line-up of sons against sons came, Judge Baugh naturally sympathized with his native Kentucky. In spite of epithets like "copperhead," he not only stood firm by his convictions, but defended the right of others to act on their convictions. So he gave his hearty consent and blessing to two sons by his first marriage when they enlisted in the Union Army. And Sophronia handled callers.

But though she lived to be 97 years old and four months and twenty days, she never permitted cards to be played in her home! One of her favorite pieces of furniture was a beautiful antique walnut stand on which always rested two Bibles, a big "Parlor" Bible and a small one for use. This walnut stand she bequeathed to a granddaughter with a sole proviso: that no cards should ever rest upon it. "The black spots on the cards are the devil's own finger-prints," she added impressively.

She wrote a beautiful flowing hand with letters perfectly formed, quite in keeping with her dignified, rather formal English style. A letter from her was a treasure to be handed down in the family. Here is one of exquisite penmanship to a granddaughter about to graduate from a medical college.

Dear May

We received your kind invitation to attend the closing exercises of your Collegiate Medical Course: but I must deny myself the pleasure of being there. And when you think of me as being almost 92 years old, I think you will kindly forgive me for being absent.

But I will be happy to greet you when you come home to stay.

With love and many good wishes from  
Grandmother  
S. Baugh





She was a purist in English diction. An anecdote is current even today of her rebuke to a sister who said in her presence, "Awfully pretty." "Can you truly mean," protested Sophronia, "that the object of your admiration fills you with profound awe?"

Always dainty and particular in dress, she had 97 long years of experience, unbroken by any illness of consequence save the last three weeks before the end, in which to demonstrate the dress and manners of a lady, and she never hesitated to give others the benefit of her advice. She it was who directed her sister Asenath in arranging the dress and pose of their mother on the occasion of her first picture at ninety.

To her daughter Judith's upbringing, she devoted much time and pains, especially since she had lost a son and daughter in infancy. Judith was a girl of extraordinary beauty, with mind so brilliant and retentive that at eighty she would help high school students who sought her aid in Latin and Algebra. After graduating from the McGregor High School, she followed her mother's footsteps in securing a teacher's license, and taught in McGregor and nearby Marquette until at twenty-two she settled down to home and community activities on marrying one of her numerous beaux, Henry Harrison Clark.

The year before, 1871, Dr. Clark had ridden into town while on a horseback trip to recuperate. At eighteen, he had run away from home to serve three years with the 92nd Illinois mounted infantry which marched with Sherman. On his return, came hard work at the Rock River Seminary, followed by harder work at Northwestern Medical College—through which he worked his way graduating at the head of his class—and a year's internship at Mercy Hospital, Chicago. All this had told on his health.

Further, he had a decision to make. One of the staff, eminent in American surgery, had offered to the brilliant student a position as assistant in his office just opening in St. Paul. Should he accept?





The church bells were ringing that Sunday evening in June as he entered McGregor. The sky was deep blue. The sunlight still played on the new leaves and glittered on the river. McGregor was a beautiful town, he thought; almost the same size as St. Paul, too, about 400 inhabitants. Which offered the better opportunity? That northern capital of an eleven-year-old state, or this busy Mississippi town? He liked McGregor! He decided to stay. He stayed there for 54 years. He built up a practice that covered miles of territory, a hospital that served the whole section, and a name that people revered and loved.

Forty or fifty miles a day through the hills of Clayton and Allamabee counties he drove, summer and winter, to see his patients, starting often at 4 o'clock in the morning. His children took turns driving the horses for him, learning much of nature and man from the father they loved. Back in time for breakfast, the school claimed the driver and the hospital and town the doctor. No wonder that later, when called upon as officer of state-wide societies to tell of early medical days in Iowa, he would praise the modern automobile for its swift advantage in bringing doctor and patient together!

Of the six children born to Judith and Henry Clark, four taught awhile after college training, before turning to other fields. One became a statistician for the United States Department of Agriculture. A daughter, after homesteading in North Dakota, specialized as a journalist in old Mississippi traditions and stories for a series of mid-west papers; and another daughter worked for twenty-five years with her father as a physician in Clark Hospital, taking over all the medical work of a 24-mile area during the First World War to release men doctors for war work.

Married now, with medical work behind her, she sees her father's point about automobiles, but still argues humorously for horses as she thinks of the inspiring 4 o'clock morning drives with him.

"I could manage a team of them," she says, "and also think about my patients. But automobiles are so stupid!





## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

I had to hire a chauffeur to look after mine! Why, when I first drove my auto into its garage, instead of finding its way like a horse, it tore down part of the building! And the first night out, when I drove it up to the post and went into the house, it stayed out all night in the snow instead of going properly into its stall like my horses!"

### 1846-1847: ROBERT ALLISON DAVIS IN THE MEXICAN WAR

"I had the pleasure of being in a meeting twice today. In the forenoon I heard a Unitarian deliver a little essay against sectarian prejudice, and in the afternoon the Methodist circuit preacher." So runs a letter of 1846 to Elizabeth Irvin, wife of Robert Allison Davis, named after his mother's father, a veteran of the Revolutionary War.

Back in Gallia County, compellingly had come to him the call of the ministry as before to his Uncle Nehemiah. There a License as Exhorter had been given to him by Clay Chapel where, with his mother and others of the family, he belonged to the Methodist Class. Here in Illinois, while studying for the ministry, he was supporting his wife and baby son by boat-building, a craft in which he and his oldest brother, Grasson, were experts.

"I was detained on the road," he wrote to Elizabeth under date of January 29, 1847. "The Wabash River was so high and so much ice in it that we had to wait better than a week before we could cross. I expect to commence working on a boat for Thomas next Monday, and I want to work two weeks before I return unless circumstances at home make it necessary that I should return sooner . . . I should very much like to see you and my boy."

Within three months of that letter from Mt. Vernon, Indiana, circumstances of both home and country found him encamped at Shawneetown, a volunteer for the Mexican War. For the frontier taught pioneers swift cooperation in defending all homes of the local community, the very crea-





tion of their own brain and brawn; and respect for the central government in Washington, the creation of their still-living grandfathers, and guarantee of freedom for America.

The novel stir and excitement of camp life breathes in his letters, mingled with declarations of love for country, wife, and son; messages to friends back home; "discoveries of love letters" to his sisters, by one "Reuben" to Sophronia and one "Absalom" to Sophia, neither of whom they married when the war was over; rumors running like wild fire through the camp. "A rumor this morning that General Scott has taken the City of Mexico without firing a gun! But I think . . . it more good than true." And again, "We expect to start to New Orleans next Sunday to join the regiment and will be delayed sometime there and then push on to join Gen. Taylor."

Since there is no time for Elizabeth to visit the encampment at Shawneetown, he describes it for her. "It is situated on a beautiful knoll . . . about a half mile from the edge of the woods. Our camps are just large enough for six men to sleep in. They are placed in two rows about fifty feet apart facing one another with the captain's tent on the end of one row and the lieutenants' at the end of the other and the cooking places back of the camps. We cook in camp kettles in the shape of long tin buckets and mess pans and eat with our fingers and pen knives and sleep on the ground, but we have good overcoats and blankets to cover ourselves. Enough of this. Though it is rough, yet we are satisfied for we are entering the service of our country and we have good officers. We feel in good spirits."

"Day before yesterday," he writes, still from Shawneetown, "we buried one man of our company . . . in the honors of war . . . something new to me. Twelve of us marched in two sections with loaded muskets, six before the corpse and six behind until we reached the graveyard when we halted with our arms on each side of the grave and let the coffin down . . . Then the captain read a prayer . . . We fired our muskets, filled up the grave and returned."





## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

Behind the stark description one feels the prophetic thought that this, too, might happen to him. Of deaths and illnesses he had occasion to write often, of which "the most fatal is measles," he says. Even in the First World War, it was measles that reaped one of the heaviest harvests of death among American soldiers because of its aftermath of pneumonia.

Of the trip down the Mississippi he writes under date of May 29, 1847, from New Orleans: "We left Shawneetown last Monday morning and arrived at New Orleans on Friday night, and taking it altogether it was not a pleasant trip. We had full liberty to go any place on the boat either on deck or in the cabin, but we had to do our own cooking and so many to cook and only one stove to cook on that we were considerably bothered to cook and eat, and what was worse, we lost two of our company. One died of the measles and the other took delirium tremens and jumped overboard and was drowned."

From camp near Carrollton, Louisiana, June 8, 1847, he writes: "We expect to start tomorrow for Vera Cruz where we will tarry for four or five days . . . and then out to Tallappa . . . We have plenty to eat, such as it is, pork, crackers, beans, rice, sugar, coffee, and live very peaceably with most of the company, especially our own . . . Most of the men are fine fellows. The Lieutenant Colonel said we are the finest looking he has seen."

From Vera Cruz, Mexico, June 27, 1847, "We left Carrollton on Tuesday and arrived here on the next Saturday, being only three days and a half out of sight of land and but little seasickness. I was not seasick at all. I was considerably disappointed in my notion of the city of Vera Cruz. It was much smaller than I expected. We have not been permitted to go into the city, but we lay at anchor about fifteen hours a short distance from where we could have a fair view of the city and forts . . . I suppose that there are twenty-five hundred or three thousand men in camps beside the forts. They are generally small men but trim built and active. The women are nearly as large as the men





and dress so nigh alike that it is hard to tell them apart at a little distance when they are riding on their mules and jacks."

"We are now encamped about two miles from the City on the Gulf shore," he continues in the same letter. "We see Mexicans passing to and fro all hours of the day who claim to be friendly but it is supposed that some of them are spies . . . Two of them were taken down to the city today, I suppose for trial, but have not heard anything more about it . . . It is also rumored that there are two thousand Mexicans some eight or ten miles back of us but will not be likely to venture nigher. If they should we are strong enough for them.

"We had three false alarms last night in which the men in general acted brave and consistent. The line of battle was formed quick and neat and some men gathered their muskets and went into line that had not been able for duty for several days. For my part, I did not feel scared. Thought that I had rather die than act cowardly! The first was occasioned by about twenty Mexicans that had slipped in to steal horses and were fired on by the guard. The other two were by mismanagement by the guard, either accidentally or on purpose."

In his last letter is this parting message to his wife. "As regards my feelings, I know that I would love to be at home where I could have your company and see my little boy . . . But it was my desire to serve my country that influenced me to come. Therefore I have the fortitude to bear with my feelings."

After that, came the news of the death of Robert Allison Davis in the City of Mexico, October 15, 1847.

He had the good fortune to be born when the Liberty Bell had rung but 43 years before, and the Constitution adopted but 31 years. His was a time when the great debates of the Revolution had a convincing reality because only recently had words been converted into deeds on such subjects as taxation without representation, involuntary servitude, trial before one's peers, religious and political freedom, the right of free speech and gathering. His was





## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

a time when pioneers were still converting great historical phrases into deeds in close ties of comradeship in founding Ohio, Illinois, and the other states of the Old Northwest Territory.

And today, to quote Walter Lippman, will our nation ever find "without the deep conviction that it is continuing a great history, either the unity which will make it secure or the hard unconquerable spirit which, if it is tested, will make it victorious?"

The principles of the Revolution and the Bill of Rights are still valid! Eternal and dynamic principles, they have power to create a revolutionary manhood and weld a citizenry conscious of their birthright and alert to defend it.

As long as one nation is an aggressor against another, as long as one human being is denied political and religious liberty not to be confused with license, as long as any man is hungry or homeless or unemployed, there a political or economic or social or spiritual frontier challenges pioneers.

To all souls, wherever born, Runnymede and the Liberty Bell forever call!

## MARY ALLISON HAS A 90th BIRTHDAY 1879

Forty years passed by from the time the family flotilla swung out of the Ohio current to the shores of Illinois. It was January 31, 1879, the 90th birthday of Mary Allison Davis. Long the Davis clan in the three counties had been preparing for the event. With Grasson and his sister, Mary Allison Cole, arriving together from Ohio, and Matilda Case from Nebraska where she and her husband had pioneered in 1854, only two of Mary's twelve children were missing—Robert, lying in Mexico City, and Sophronia, detained by her husband's blindness. Of grandchildren and great-grandchildren many surrounded her that day and hundreds of neighbors, for whom, with her ever-present wicker basket, she had ridden on her pony scores of miles to bring



health and life. All vied with each other in tributes of love.

A call on Grandmother was always a ceremonious occasion. Though her spacious room formed an ell to the large farmhouse of her son, Reuben, no caller ever came to the house at any time without first paying respects to her before entering Reuben's door. By the fireplace with its brown pot of tea perpetually brewing over the crane, she received her guests. A dainty little figure she made, red-cheeked and keen-eyed even at ninety, dressed in white lace cap, challis of rosebud pattern, with tight waist and full-gathered skirt, her wonted red and blue bandanna tri-cornered across her slightly rounded shoulders, and her favorite necklace of vari-colored glass beads around her throat.

Mind alert and body agile, she welcomed her callers with dignity and graciousness. Whether the conversation touched on current events or ran back to the days of the spinning wheel in the farther corner of the hearth, she was equally at home. To one guest she might recall the wolves howling around the sheepfold at night and show the gun with which she slipped out of the house to shoot them. To another she would praise the modern inventions, pointing to the organ by the farther wall, the first brought to Illinois, the Seth Thomas clock of 1854—still running in the California home of a great-granddaughter today—and especially the wonderful illumination of oil lamps, replacing candles and grease-lamps in her home in 1857, even when kerosene was seventy cents a gallon.

But mention a sewing-machine, and she became reserved! Her dresses must be hand-made to please her, and she preferred her own sewing to the seams her daughters ran up swiftly on the machine. Yes, she wanted her daughters up-to-date in household equipment, but, turning the subject neatly, especially abreast of reading! As for her daughters, so active was their mother at ninety, that they were much of the opinion, as was Alice in Wonderland, that it took lots of running just to stand still beside her!

Gala event as was her ninetieth birthday, her grandchildren loved best to remember the times they were per-





## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

mitted to run over to her room by two's and three's. Always ready for a lark with children, whom she dearly loved, gaily she would take them out to watch the cane-mill trickling out molasses, or to inspect the mulberry tree for the promised pie if they could shake down enough berries on a white sheet beneath, or on a tour around the farm to discover some other treat. If the weather forced them to stay indoors, then Grandmother would bake the most delicious little corn-cakes imaginable on the hearth, and the children were permitted to blow the clean wood-ashes off of them! Spread with sweet home-churned butter, theirs was a taste delectable! But the luxury of luxuries was the privilege of snuggling up with her at night between two feather beds. One thing, however, she would not let them do. She would not let any child peep under the cover of her wicker basket with its wicker handle, always standing at the foot of her bed. And that, they wanted to examine most of all!

By the blazing log fire she told them dramatically marvelous stories of early days and Indian tales, tales her grandchildren and their children still retell vividly. And in turn they would sing her favorite hymns and popular songs. One of her favorites was also Lincoln's, called "Forty Years Ago," sung to a rollicking air that set feet to dancing!

## FORTY YEARS AGO

How wondrous are the changes since forty years ago,  
When girls wore woolen dresses, and boys wore  
pants of tow,  
And shoes were made of cow-hide, and socks of  
home-spun wool,  
And children did a half day's work before they  
went to school.





CHORUS

Just forty years ago, just forty years ago,  
The men and the boys, the girls and their toys,  
The work and the play, the night and the day,  
The world and its ways have all changed  
'round,  
Since forty years ago.

The girls took music lessons upon the spinning wheel,  
And practiced late and early on spindle swift,  
and reel.

The boys would ride the horse to mill a dozen  
miles or so,  
And hurry off before 'twas day, some forty  
years ago.

The people rode to meeting on sleds, instead of  
sleighs,  
And wagons rode as easy as buggies nowadays.  
The oxen answered well for team, though now  
they'd be too slow,  
For people lived not half so fast, some forty  
years ago.

How well do I remember that Wilson patent stove  
That father bought and paid for in cloth our  
girls had wove.  
And how the people wondered when we got the  
thing to going,  
They said 'twould burst and kill us all, some  
forty years ago.

Yes, everything has changed so, 'tis plain to tell  
the cause,  
For men are always tampering with Nature's  
wonderous laws.  
And what on earth we're coming to, does anybody  
know?  
For everything has changed so much, since forty  
years ago!



## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

Yes, children loved to scamper over to visit her. Quick-witted she was, they said, and oh, so merry and happy!

Two daguerrotypes her children coaxed her to sit for, one in winter with white cap tied tight beneath her chin and her shawl tugged close to her neck, and the other in summer with bonnet strings loose and bandanna over her shoulders. But rather dubiously she must have sat for the pictures, as her firm-set mouth reveals grimly. Did it seem an unreasonable concession to her daughters, one wonders, or did the prolonged pose bore one so active?

Yet for those two pictures her children and their children's children were deeply grateful three years later—and they were many! When in 1882 Mary Allison Davis passed on at the age of 93, her direct descendants numbered 303.

## GLIMPSES OF FORTY YEARS

1839-1879

In truth the three counties knew much of the activities of the Davis clan, so tight did the pioneers hold their world together in cooperation.

Minerva they rallied around early. With unaccustomed ax, her husband, Reuben Lionberger, had dared tame a wilderness, farm, serve as Justice of the Peace, and contribute without stint his store of political and historical knowledge to organizing community life. In twelve years the wilderness got him. His wife was left with three small children of the nine that came to them.

With independent spirit she turned to her loom. Gifted in weaving and tailoring beyond all women of the region, she spun, dyed yarn, wove cloth, and tailored the two homespun suits a year the men then thought necessary, the winter one lined with cheese-cloth. In exchange, she accepted money, food, or work on her 160 acres. When her oldest son, John, was killed in the Civil War just as he planned to shoulder responsibility for the farm and his mother, she planted flax, and more daring still, the first cotton crop in





Jefferson County with the aid of her youngest, Adoniram Judson Lionberger. Very busy was she in weaving for the neighbors carpets, blankets, and coverlets, often with the gay companionship of her mother beside her, until her son grew up to marry a beloved bride, Mary Elizabeth Rogers. Then she devoted herself to her Baptist Church and her flower-beds.

Mary Elizabeth, too, the community had surrounded with pioneer protection and hospitality when her family faced the great peril of pioneers, illness without adequate medical facilities. After six of her family were lost within a few weeks, a neighbor mothered her at nine, and Minerva her six-year-old sister Amanda. Years later, all the countryside flocked to a double wedding in Minerva's home to see Adoniram marry Mary, and Thomas Irvin, Amanda. The whole township rejoiced, for 'Niram, besides being a prosperous farmer and horse breeder, was starting a career that led to his becoming School Trustee, Treasurer of the Sugar Camp Baptist Church, Road Commissioner, and County Supervisor for eight terms. In the eyes of the neighborhood, it was a happy day for Minerva's brave life.

Sophia Elizabeth, also, was left a widow early. She had married into the Sturman family from which her brothers, Reuben and Nehemiah, and her cousin, Reuben Boyls, had chosen wives. An old Virginia family it was, neighbors to the early Washingtons in Bedford County. Their great-grandfather was at Valley Forge and fought at Brandywine in Colonel Parker's Regiment. Many stories of the Revolution their grandfather used to tell, heard from his father. He himself remembered the firing of the guns in an engagement fought on their plantation, and the weeping of the women. When he had cried too, his colored mammy had carried him in her arms to the chicken yard to forget his tears.

It was a fine match, that of Sophia and James Ritchie Sturman. With pioneer vision foreseeing the days of brick houses in Illinois, he owned a brick yard doing business in several counties. But besides sterling character he possessed





## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

a genial personality and physical prowess that were his undoing, at community gatherings like Fourth of July, corn-husking, and house-raising. On such occasions the old-fashioned games and square dances were not the whole of the hilarious fun although folksy and democratic with their pungent, salty calls and spirited violin music by a man like Frank Brake, the life of parties. Feats of strength were sure to be on the program also. Amazona's husband could lift up by the chimes a thirty-two gallon barrel filled with cider and drink from the bung to win the title of champion in lifting feats. But on another occasion James Sturman, in spite of his six feet two inches and 200 pounds, broke a blood vessel and died. After that, the women put a stop to weight-lifting contests.

Left with two children, Sophia married Frank Brake a few years later.

A delightful couple Amazona and Thomas Jefferson DeWitt made, she, small, dainty, and slim, particular about dressing well, quick-witted and full of fun; he, six-feet-one and over 200 in weight. Genial and open-handed they both were, well-adapted to the prosperity that, coming to them through increasing crops on ever increasing acreage, made their home the logical place to entertain notables and prospective settlers. His team of large yellow horses was always on the road on business, going to Baptist affairs, or showing prospective settlers and guests the opportunities of the County. But he was never too busy to hear his twelve children spell from the blue-backed Webster spelling-books, sing their geography songs, and recite their Bible lessons. For every son and daughter of his, one rule he had alike: each must be married from his fireside with the whole neighborhood invited to the wedding feast at long tables seating over three hundred. To his way of thinking, marriage was a sacrament; home, the basis of community life; and the community, essential witnesses of vows pledged "until death do us part."

For his grandchildren he kept in his desk a box of peppermints which he would accidentally find when sitting





down to work on business, Church, or School Board accounts—an ardently hoped-for signal which brought the children flocking around him. So contagious were his merry ways that the family tested whether or not a child was ill by taking him to Grandfather's. If he could not persuade the youngster to laugh and romp with him, off to the doctor went the child hurriedly. The home of Amazona and Thomas DeWitt was a bulwark of family and community solidarity.

Timothy's home, too, honored the tradition of neighborhood hospitality. Every day of the week his table was open to friends dropping in, especially after he returned from the Civil War more or less invalided for life. In spite of his limited strength, his grandsons found him spirited enough in his seventies to pick up his old, heavy musket and hit the bull's eye in a shooting contest with them.

Somehow, Sundays and birthdays especially endeared to his neighbors Uncle Timothy, as he was called. At the Union Baptist Church, three miles away, whenever he was able to do so, he reverently passed the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper. After church, many of the congregation would drop in to dinner unannounced as a matter of course. No less than forty uninvited guests a grandson once counted, while behind the scenes in the kitchen extra chickens were rushed into boiling kettles of water, prepared regularly for such emergencies. At his birthday, every 21st of May, between three hundred and four hundred people would sit on his lawn around long tables made by planks over wooden horses. Those birthday parties his children's children still count the highspots of their lives.

## AND SCHOOLS?

Nehemiah 3rd took responsibility for school at thirty-three.

Quiet and unassuming he was, slight and slender; but on the School Board in 1860 he spoke and acted with a conviction and authority accepted because of the respect





he commanded. It was he who decreed that the little log school house with its puncheon floor must go. Only a substantial frame building accommodating one hundred was suitable for their Franklin County township, he argued. Well he knew the arguments, for back in Ohio he had attended a log cabin school until at twelve he had pioneered to Franklin County. Here his education stopped save for his own efforts and study of local and national issues.

And the teachers? Well, with their "District School" measuring straight up to the 1860 State Law requiring full eight grades, the "four sciences, philosophy, physiology, botany, and geology," and courses qualifying brighter students for teaching in backward schools, obviously the best teachers available must be secured. At that period, Pennsylvania had the reputation for the most highly trained teachers. So "modern Pennsylvania teachers" he was chiefly instrumental in obtaining at a fabulous salary for that day, almost twice that paid Illinois teachers! And the parents approved, almost all of them tax-payers. That meant modern text-books also, Sanders' and Horner's. From that Jefferson "Deestric" School, as it was then pronounced, pupils could and did go to the normal schools and colleges of the day, including his own children and their children after advanced training. One served on the staff of a university of China and of Turkey, another in prison reform work in Illinois, and another in prominent state agricultural work in Indiana.

Even when emergency required a substitute teacher, the outstanding men of the community were willing to be drafted for that school and the few approaching its standards. Once, for the last two months of the term, it was the President of the Bank, John W. Goin, a tall, stately gentleman of six feet, who acceded to the insistence of the Directors.

When the pupils entered the schoolroom the day he took charge, they saw written in beautiful penmanship on the board: "You may do as you please." They did. The bell in the cupola rang for school to begin. To the board





he stepped and added, "if you do what is right." Silence reigned in the schoolroom, dismayed silence. Only one boy attempted to do the wrong thing. So instantly and vigorously was he dealt with by the aid of a ruler, that "order and the hardest kind of application prevailed until the end of the term," says a United States army man, present that day as a pupil. "We never knew anyone could learn so much in two months," he added.

Equally progressive was Nehemiah 3rd on his farm. Aside from acreage devoted practically to raising family food, the rest of his 180 acres stood in orchards of apple, peach, and cherry. What his family did not need in fresh, canned, or dried fruit, he sold. When grafting his trees and planting crops, he applied the best methods.

A clear-cut understanding he had with his wife. Indoors she was the head of the family. All their eleven children lived up to her standards and demands, and her standards were the best southern in tradition. Though her grandmother, Sally Dabney, came from Carolina to Kentucky at five in 1776, with Boone's first party of immigrants, where she married William Sturman of Virginia, she never forgot that she was a Hancock from Carolina.

But outdoors, Nehemiah 3rd was the head of the family. Whether it was the farm, the Missionary Baptist Church, the School Board, the Odd Fellows, or the Greenback Party, he was The Family.

## ASENATH AND HARDIN

Asenath lived most of her life in Jefferson County, a twenty-five mile trip from her mother's home that meant a day's journey with team, then.

It was Hardin Davisson who took her there. Born in 1814 in Grayson County, Kentucky, he knew well the high rolling hills and rich bottom lands along rapid streams like the Rough with its Falls, and the Green with its feuds between private interests exacting river tolls and the pro-





testing lumbermen floating their rafts down to the Ohio. When they reached port at Evansville on the Indiana side, they often staged riotous celebrations that emptied their pay envelopes. One night they set out to spank all the policemen in town. They did the job thoroughly! When the angry officers turned the tables by capturing the somewhat sobered men and brought them before Court, both parties gasped at the verdict.

"Release the men!" thundered the Judge. "It's they who bring prosperity to this town with their rafts! They are entitled to their fun!" To this day the story is handed down in Kentucky families along the Green.

Hardin received his name from Matilda Hardin, his grandmother on his mother's side, an old Carolina family of many lawyers. Pioneering early to Kentucky, one branch bought 10,000 acres from George Washington, part of the great tract "in the Ohio Country" which he planned to develop in his surveying days, a section he recommended to all Americans should the Revolution fail. Today the descendants possess not only the deed with George Washington's name signed, the third owner, but also the original patent of the original owner, one Skinner.

The old slave quarters on the plantation are torn down, but still today from its stone foundations the big, booming bell calls the hired men to breakfast at 5 in the morning. And still in summer out on the screened-in porch of the summer kitchen the mistress of the house waves her peach branch over the table in old Southern style to drive off the few persistent flies. There, too, stands the splendidly equipped shop, a combined carpenter and blacksmithy place with complete outfit in tools and forge, reminiscent of the days from the Colonial period through the Civil War when every up-to-date plantation raised men proficient in every trade, a self-sustaining unit like that of Washington at Mt. Vernon. Public-spirited men, these who "lived under their own vine and fig-tree," to quote Washington's phrase, active in local and county government, and conversant with state and national affairs. Readers they were and thinkers.





From this kind of background young Hardin came to Illinois at 23 from Leitchfield, Kentucky, where he had cut down the first tree preparatory to his father building the first house. Experienced he was, too, and a craftsman at heart. At 17 apprenticed to a blacksmith in Hardinsburg, after completing his course, he had opened in 1835 his own smithy in Keokuk, Iowa, then a town of less than six houses, and in 1837 arrived in Moore's Prairie, Hamilton County.

There he met Asenath and married her on the 7th day of January, 1841, with Esquire Atchison officiating. Soon he owned a farm as well as a smithy. Versatile in all that a man had to know and to do in those days, he specialized in making wheels by hand, almost a lost art today, an important product when transportation called for boat or wagon. Selling out in 1853 to pioneer in Nebraska, he passed through Mt. Vernon. So impressed was he with the beauty of the county seat, that he settled down there to business and the accumulation of property.

With Asenath he joined the Methodist Church and became a trustee as was his brother-in-law, Judge Baugh. Their house was painted white with white fence and friendly gate, writes Kate Davisson, a granddaughter, with

"Bright-blooming hollyhocks, slender and tall,  
Like sentinels bold guarding the way"

up the path to the door where Asenath welcomed her guests to afternoon tea. At last, after chatting gleefully about flowers, books, and music, her husband's work as alderman of the third ward on the Prohibition ticket, and reciting some of her own poetry, she would escort her callers to the gate along a path bordered by high trees, relics of the primeval forest, and past beds of

"Lilacs and lilies, portulaca,  
Everything stable as old alpaca"

bidding farewell with "Keep your chin up and courage high!"





That her courage ran high, the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* reported when a cyclone roared into the town one Sunday, killing over 100 people and levelling most of the city. Four houses which Asenath owned crashed down, and four rooms of her own home collapsed. But, runs the news item, "Mrs. Hardin Davisson, a sweet-faced old lady, bearing her own losses unselfishly, gave hot coffee, bread and food all day long to people without homes," and the *Mt. Vernon Daily News* wrote that she was "loved by every man, woman, and child" in the city.

With parents as artistic and craftsmanlike as were Asenath and Hardin, it is not strange that among their twelve children were journalists, an architect and builder, and some artists.

Don owned his own paper at Cripple Creek, Colorado. But his biggest thrill came in 1858 when attending at Carlyle with his father a historic debate between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas. Only five years old, he was privileged in the crowded hall to swing his legs on the edge of the platform and look up at the speakers. As Lincoln finished a great speech amid the applause of the audience, his tall, gaunt figure stooped down to the little boy gazing up. Down went his hand into the pail Don was carrying, and out it came with some red plums! These Lincoln started to eat, walking back to his seat. Don always thought it a bigger scoop than his older brothers ever made, one as an editor of the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, and Will, the other, as editor and owner of the Hamilton County paper at McLeansboro!

At that time the county and town papers formed public opinion not only on local issues but on state and national. Inevitable this was, for the railroad had reached the Mississippi only about five years before Will began writing, the telegraph was practical only over short lines, and the telephone was unknown. When by stage-coach and horse-back the mail made a new record from San Francisco to Washington, D. C., in 1858, by arriving in 24 days, 18 hours, and 35 minutes, President Buchanan hailed it as





"A glorious triumph for civilization and union!" Will, or "Uncle Billy" as his hometown later called him, was seventeen then and just beginning his career. On the editors of town and county papers in that day rested a stern responsibility to secure the facts in spite of difficulties, to interpret the facts honestly and courageously, and to arouse the public to think intelligently on the great issues of the day such as secession and union, slavery, and reconstruction.

Uncle Billy took his responsibility seriously. Though sometimes on the losing side politically, honesty of conviction meant more to him than profit. When in 1872 his paper, *The Golden Era*, supported the Greenback Party then running Peter Cooper for President of the United States, so fiery were his editorials that the Republicans of the town offered him a purse of \$300, not an inconsiderable sum at that time, to change the policy! Indignantly he spurned the money. But when the Greenback cause failed, he had to suspend the paper. As a result, he became a co-editor of *The Progressive Farmer*.

So completely did he make his five children his companions that they adored him whether in the family circle or the office. At evening prayer they were most eager to sing his favorite hymn, "Rock of Ages," and his newspaper was almost a family project for which his children helped collect and write the news, and sought advertisers and subscribers.

This work with him developed a civic spirit that led his son, Will, after graduating from a college of dentistry, to pioneer in a new Arkansas town, where he became mayor, organizer of the bank, and its President; and their daughter, Catherine, in addition to ranking as professional with pen, brush, and voice, to serve on juvenile delinquency and conservation boards in Missouri.

And among the greatest inspirations to both was Asenath, in whose home her mother, Mary Allison Davis, often visited.





## TWO OTHERS THERE WERE

At their mother's 90th birthday Grasson Davis and Mary Allison Cole, the two children who remained in Ohio, not only had much to learn about their Illinois brothers and sisters, but something to tell of the old family home and friends.

The bride of a few months who bade farewell to her family that spring day forty years before, at 61 was still full of fun and vitality. Far too modest and gracious was she to realize that the stream of people calling at the Gallipolis home revelled in her quick wit and radiant disposition. Though nine of her ten children had flown, six still clustered near her in their own homes, and her daughter Celicia lived with her parents to make her mother still happier with her exuberant spirits and loving ways. Celicia's hobby, too, bound her to all the family, for she kept a scrap-book of family events with material dating back to her Great-Aunt Nancy in 1784, and that meant correspondence.

Stories Mary could tell of her son, Reese, Captain of the U. S. gunboat, *Silver Lake*, during the Civil War, and of her son, Grasson Marshall Cole of the 7th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, killed in the advance guard at the battle of Ebenezer Church, whose commission as Lieutenant was sent home to his father; and of her son-in-law, Samuel McElhinny, who, enlisting at eight, received a bronze medal from Congress for capturing a Confederate flag. The daring exploits of old Colonel Safford, into whose family a daughter had married, furnished many an exciting tale, for he was the intimate companion of Daniel Boone before being elected senator and associate judge. But whether she talked of these, or of her twenty-two grandchildren, some in college, or of the activities of her Methodist Church, she had the knack of making every event scintillate.

Grasson Davis was seventy-two at his mother's birthday, tall, slender, and straight as ever. Many questions he had to answer about the old brick homestead on the river front,





turned into a workshop when in 1843 he built for his bride a two-story frame house near the old log-cabin, still standing under the great-girthed walnut tree, with the tree and flower-bordered lane leading to the wharf. For twenty-nine years he had been trustee of Clay Chapel where Sophronia and Matilda had belonged to the first "Class" and his mother had been received on confession of faith at fifty, and where his wife had served as president of the missionary society till going on.

But perhaps he would never have become a member had it not been for the kindly ruse of a minister. Everyone wondered why a man of his sterling integrity should resist all persuasion and yet usually attend services, contribute liberally, and study his Bible assiduously. When pressed, he always answered with characteristic modesty, "I am not good enough." A new minister pondered the problem. Without Grasson's knowledge his name was written in the "class-book," and the book handed to him to attend to some church business. Mechanically Grasson glanced down the list of members. At his own name, he paused long. After a silence, slowly he spoke: "Well," he said, as if to himself, "they wrote my name down there. If they think I don't do right, they can scratch it off." From that time he served the church continuously as secretary of the Sunday-School, trustee, and steward. His was a quiet, deep nature. Without an anaesthetic he had a cataract removed and never uttered a sound.

No wonder when Celicia dedicated at birth the oldest of their five children, Franklin Grasson Davis, to be a minister and missionary, Grasson later mortgaged his farm that his wife's dream might come true. In India the name is revered to this day for its powerful message of freedom of soul and mind in Christ and his work in the Methodist Theological Seminary and the Calcutta Boys' School. And their daughter, Ann, founded in the mountains of Alabama, with the aid of her artist and minister husband, Eleazer Ball Lee Elder, a descendant of the family of Washington's mother, a school that has sent its thousands into the work



## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

of building at home and abroad a civilization based on morality and Christianity.

In the pioneering period of the United States, the influence of the early outposts of the Church cannot be over-estimated. The long canoe voyages of Father Marquette, the horse-back trips of the Methodist circuit riders, and the barefoot pilgrimages of men like Nehemiah Davis left more behind than missions, and Clay Chapel, and the churches at Rainbow and Chauncey. They left an impress on the moral stamina, the spirit of democracy, and the spiritual insight of thousands on thousands of American pioneering families, an impress that from generation to generation has continuously been at work, for over three hundred years, to infuse righteousness and social justice into business, professional, civic, and educational enterprises in every state of the Union and every country of the world.





## KANSAS

With Captain Grasson DeWitt . . .	1858
With Reuben Davis . . . . .	1887
With Bob . . . . .	1939





WITH CAPTAIN GRASSON DeWITT  
IN KANSAS

1858

The frontier resounded with thrilling call to adventure in the 1850's! Fantastic as the dream had looked to timid souls, steamboats were chugging up the waters with their back paddles, nosing into the far tributaries of the Mississippi to the land of the Dakotas, Wyoming, and Montana where the prairies roll up to the foothills of the Rockies. Trains, that daring invention of the East, already dashed up to the Mississippi at twenty-miles an hour, easily reeling off in sixty minutes a distance that took a man all day to cover by horse-back. Stronger than ever flamed the pioneer spirit. The Kansas wind was calling and the Kansas sun-flowers wooing! Why not advance?

In 1858 Grasson DeWitt answered the call. That was to be expected. At five, had he not revelled in the exciting adventure of floating down the Ohio River to Illinois with twenty-five of his "dear families?" So busy had the flotilla kept him just watching what everyone was doing and scamp-ering to get everywhere at once, that he nearly drove his mother frantic.

So Amazona and his father, Thomas Jefferson DeWitt, were none too surprised to hear the announcement, now that he was 24, of a reconnoitering trip to Kansas with a party headed by his father-in-law, Solomon Webb. Considerately he left at home his twenty-year-old wife, Emilia Webb, and their two babes. Though the rest of the party were saying good-bye to Illinois forever, for Grasson this was an exploratory journey before risking his family in Kansas.

Three days they drove their covered wagons from the Franklin County home to the ferry for St. Louis, and then on through to Kansas City, a frontier log-cabin town, slowly driving the live-stock before them. For almost two weeks their covered wagons pitched and tossed over the rough



trail that led across the "Forty-mile Prairie," without cabin, fuel, or water. Over campfires the women cooked the food brought from home, varied by game the men shot.

Then one day there rolled before them the rapid current of the Neosho, the third largest river in Kansas. Through its low summer waters they forded. After Mr. Webb had staked out his claim and built his house, Grasson returned to his Illinois home, still doubtful about such a trip for Emilia and the babes.

Three years flew by. A cannon booming from Fort Sumter broke up homes north and south. At the news, Grasson DeWitt volunteered. After brief training, he left for the Tennessee front as Captain of Company I, 110th Illinois Volunteer Infantry. Two years passed in campaigns against Bragg and others, led by Buell and Rosencrantz. At the battle of Stone River, his first lieutenant and close friend was shot down beside him, and two bullets went through his own hat. While the army was being reorganized at Chattanooga for Sherman's march to the sea, he was ill for some time. Honorably discharged, he was sent home.

Partly recovered, he set out one day to plow his fields for wheat. So frisky were the horses that he threw the lines around his shoulders better to control them. Suddenly the plowshare snagged under a strong root near a stump. Impatiently the team surged ahead. Over the plow-handles flew Grasson, head first. "That settles it!" he exclaimed as he picked himself up from the furrow and examined his bruises. "I am going to Kansas where there are no stumps!"

Unhitching his horses, he left the plow standing exactly where it stuck. One doubt still lingered. Would Emilia like Kansas? Guerrillas and Indians were active there! He tramped back to the house to ask her. "Well, if mother can stand it, I can," she answered with spirit. Still not wanting her to decide blindly, he suggested that they leave their two oldest, Flavius and John, at his father's, and visit her parents in Kansas with little Alice and Jenny. They went. Emilia liked Kansas. Never one word of complaint did she utter through the hardships that faced them later.





Satisfied with her decision, Grasson bought a relinquished claim with a cabin standing on it, two and a half miles from Humboldt, on Owl Creek, for all early settlers settled on streams and rivers preferably, because of water-supply and shade trees. Then he journeyed back to Franklin County to sell his farm and bring his two sons to their new home.

Waving a final good-bye to the family in Illinois, they boarded the train for Illinoistown. On the way, the cars filled with soldiers for the front. At the Mississippi, for three hours eight-year-old Flavius and his small brother watched with fascination the marching troops board boats for the south amid bands playing and exciting farewells. Then their boat, the *Warsaw*, clanged up to the wharf. North up the river, 150 miles to Hannibal, Missouri, the rear paddle-wheel churned the water slowly. Since the Southern forces held the south part of Missouri, that was the safest route west.

Finally after several railroad changes, on crossing the ferry from Wellston to Leavenworth in Kansas, the boys went wild with delight to see their Grandfather Webb waiting for them with two covered wagons. The four-day trip from there to Mother was far too short, so enchanted were they with wagon-life and camping and cooking by the roadside.

More excitement awaited them at Lawrence. Before them smoldered blackened ruins of hotels, stores, and homes, a sinister sight. Yet nine days before it had been a prosperous town! "Quantrill did this!" they heard with imprecations.

On to Humboldt they drove, a hamlet of few houses then. Here a sacked town and the charred ruins of the water-mill stared at them. With one settler killed, resentment ran high. "Quantrill!" The name struck terror.

Throughout 1863 and 1864 guerrilla fighting waged. Sometimes soldiers of North and South would skirmish. More often, bands of ruffians committed violence for revenge or loot under cover of bitter war hatreds, usually





wearing uniforms without authorization. For two years Captain Grasson DeWitt and other able-bodied men of the community served in the militia against them. Repeatedly to scattered homesteads messengers galloped with warnings to beware of guerrillas and Indians under white renegades! When ominous news threatened, at nightfall families slipped out of their homes under cover of darkness to the blockhouse at Humboldt or Belmont, fourteen miles farther.

If time pressed and the warning came too late for the militia to troop together, Captain Grasson would guide his family in the blackness to the timber, half a mile away. There, in order not to betray their hiding place, they would camp without any fire. At dawn someone would steal along through the tall grass to a nearby hilltop to look for signs of ruins where settlers' houses stood. If no column of smoke rose to mark a raid, the family went back to their home for the day.

Month after month dragged on. In their homes people listened at night for the sound of horses' hoofs. At the distant thud, the women rushed their men-folk out into the prairie grass to hide. When the hoofs stopped at a house and a blow of the sabre fell on the door, it was the women of the household who threw open the door. "He's not at home," they answered boldly, framed in the door against the firelight of the hearth. This they had learned to answer after man after man had flung open the door at night, only to slump to the floor with a volley of shots in his body—leaving the women-folk in tears, as hoof-beats grew faint in the darkness.

Once Flavius opened the door. It was a cold wintry evening. Draughts blew through the square muslin-covered holes serving as windows. His father and an uncle were sitting and talking by the fireplace which served for cooking before the days of cookstoves. His mother was putting away the supper dishes while the children played and laughed around their two-room cabin.

"Hark!" his father suddenly called out. "Cavalry!"





Flavius and the others fell silent and tense. They watched their father and uncle grab their rifles and run out the south door. It was so dark that night that Capt. DeWitt stopped by the woodpile and listened. Their uncle ran farther into a large patch of weeds.

Up to the north door dashed the horses. A sword knock on the door! Emilia nodded to Flavius to open.

"Is your father at home?" asked an officer.

"No, he's not," promptly replied Flavius, trying to make himself look taller than nine years.

"Have you been home all day?" came the next question.

"Yes, sir," answered Flavius.

"Did you see any Indians pass by?"

"Yes, six," responded Flavius, wondering if there was an uprising.

"Did they have any loose horses?" came the query.

"Yes, about twenty."

"Where did they cross Owl Creek?" demanded the man, looking at Flavius sharply.

"At Foster's Ford," instantly replied Flavius.

An order rang out sharply, and the horsemen wheeled in the direction of the Ford. "The Indians stole the horses from our soldiers at Humboldt," shouted the officer over his shoulder to Flavius, as the band disappeared in the night.

What relief to know that this time the friendly soldiers of the U. S. garrison had called!

The very first time that Flavius and little Charles ever saw Indians, three big braves were stalking toward their house. Flavius hid in the grass and Charles jumped into the lye hopper. Only four, it easily hid him. Closer came the steps. His heart beat loud. Then a shadow blackened out the sun. A great, tall Indian with feathered head-gear was gazing down at him, chuckling away, his shoulders heaving with laughter. Little Charles understood that the Indian knew he was afraid! After that, the boys were not afraid of Indians.

The Indians had their own reasons for keeping on good terms with the settlers and the militia, for that matter.





Once, 3,500 camped two miles from the DeWitt's. Somewhat perturbed, since few soldiers of the regular troops were stationed at the fort just then, a delegation of settlers paid a ceremonial visit to learn the reason for the encampment. The Indians had come to the white men as allies, for safety! The Confederates had threatened them for furnishing troops to the Federal Army! Good-looking troops they were too, and good soldiers.

Other critical problems faced the early Kansas settlers. One was food. Often a man's gun protected his family from starvation. Between trips for turkey and deer nearby and wild hogs in neighboring Arkansas, and a seven or eight day trip to the railroad, 120 miles away, for eastern supplies, common sense often dictated hunting parties.

Of these the buffalo hunt was a community affair. Grandfather Webb was always chosen leader, for he was a mighty hunter, sprung of Carolina stock. Once he took Flavius along. That trip lasted a month with twenty-one men and eleven wagons going far afield into dangerous regions. Hard work as well as fun ruled the day, for buffalo skins were stripped off on the spot for robes and blankets, and the meat cut off to save hauling bones home.

Besides his own family to provide for, Grasson kept a brotherly eye on his oldest sister, Eleanor Jane, and her four children, who homesteaded in 1864 on a ranch nearby on Owl Creek; and on his youngest sister, Lydia, who in 1887 moved to Chanute, twenty miles distant, a widow with eight children. Many a time Grasson sent one of his sons on horseback with a gift of food to them, especially in spring when everyone's supplies ran low, and the pioneers shared generously with each other of their little. In spite of the utmost frugality and pioneer sharing, Eleanor Jane's family once had to go for a three-week stretch with nothing to eat but potatoes. Grim work it was to muddle through a winter without running short of provisions and starving.

Not money but the corn crop was the safest guarantee against starvation. That insured cornbread and cornmeal mush—if storms or blizzards did not prevent carrying





one's corn to the nearest grist-mill at Leroy, sixteen miles away.

Once after Eleanor Jane had forded the Neosho River to carry her corn to the water-mill, the river began to rise rapidly. On her return it raged like a torrent in flood stage. Not for a moment did she hesitate. Into the swirling waters she plunged her horse and swam him across with her precious cornmeal high and dry.

"It was fool-hardy," reproached a neighbor. "You might have drowned!"

"A mother's first concern," she replied simply, "is her children. Mine were alone across the river."

Even such a simple task as the family laundry meant risk with wells scarce at first, and grass waist-high to the river banks. Usually the women walked down together for safety's sake as well as to help each other and to visit. One day, when Lydia took with her an aunt from Illinois, a rattle snake, coiled in the grass, struck at her. Swiftly Lydia cut open the spot where the fangs had entered, tore apart some young chickens nearby, and applied the raw flesh to the snakebite. Piece after piece turned green until all the poison was absorbed. Then they went their way, little the worse for the not unusual adventure.

As life settled down after the War, Captain DeWitt took an active part in public issues. Elected County Surveyor on the Republican ticket, he served almost continuously for 35 years. Had he not interrupted his surveying to enter the Kansas Legislature, he would have held the state record. Scarcely a square section lay in the County that he had not tramped and surveyed.

Next to surveying, schools interested him deeply. He had taught in Illinois, and in Kansas he served as superintendent of the schools of his county. Today in his honor the oldest township school is called the DeWitt School.

But his interest was not merely academic. How could it be when his oldest son, Flavius, came home from the first log-cabin school with his feet frost-bitten in the class-room one bitter winter day? The fireplace simply would not



heat the room properly in spite of all that his teacher, Miss Deborah Gilbert, could do in piling on logs with the aid of the bigger boys.

Obviously a new and real school-building was needed! Imagine how the mothers and fathers felt, knowing that their youngsters were squirming to hold themselves erect without any backrest on a long bench, merely a slab of wood planed fairly smooth on top, with stakes for legs driven into a two-inch auger hole in the floor! To practice penmanship, they stood. In relays Miss Deborah sent them to the one desk running along a wall, a large slab of wood planed smooth on the top side, supported by stakes fitted into the log side-wall like brackets.

But equipment is not learning, and a Mark Hopkins on one end of a log with a pupil on the other may be defined as a university. So it is not surprising to find that the record of Flavius as a man shows he received good instruction. At eighty-five, writes Flavius: "Now, pupils have nine months of school each year while we had only three or four, and a little later, about 1870, we were wonderfully pleased to have as much as six months each year. We did not have as many fringes to our education as today, but we had the real groundwork, and our penmanship was better."

Nevertheless, frost-bitten feet are stubborn facts. Within two years of starting the school, Captain DeWitt and the other parents had an adequate school building erected.

Then as today, parents occasionally criticized. When Emma DeWitt was old enough to teach, she stalked a domineering old woman one day with a revolver to protest against a ruling of the Trustees. Shaking the pistol under Emma's nose before the startled class, she shouted, "There you be, sitting like a queen on a thorn, dictating to my little gal!" Emma's "thorn" was the joke of the family thereafter.

Though settlers' homes spread out thin on the prairies, plenty of children grew up right in Captain DeWitt's home. Fourteen of them lived to marry, vigorous and strong. Four





more slipped away as babies. Emilia, Grasson's wife, died when her eighth baby came, and Jenny, his second wife, when her second child arrived. So Rebecca Hite, his third, a former school teacher from Illinois, raised eight of her own and the rest of the brood. She lived to be 87, proud of all her children, steeped in family lore, happy to welcome back the sons and daughters on visits.

Life with father was such a joyous adventure in that home that his grandchildren, too, eagerly maneuvered to visit him. On Sundays they loved to go with him to the Baptist Church he had helped to found and watch him teach his Sunday School class. Every night when lessons were finished, the children swarmed around him to sing hymns around the organ, which they took turns in playing till family prayer-time and bed.

If, late to breakfast, any tried to sneak in unobserved after the blessing, he would lay down his knife and fork and gaze at the offender. Then in a loud voice full of dramatic inflections, he would exclaim, "Another little DeWitt early riser!" Picking up knife and fork, he would go on eating. Stung by the rebuke, each little DeWitt would hang his head, resolving not to let it happen again. But Sundays always saw a perfect score for breakfast. That day, biscuit from white flour was served, when white flour cost from six to eight dollars a hundred pounds. Other days, corn-bread came to the table.

That their father was a man of integrity, his children well knew. They grew up in a home where county and state problems were intimately discussed, for he served as County Supervisor two terms, and two terms in the State Legislature. There he distinguished himself as a deliberate thinker, one who never jumped to conclusions and seldom lost an argument. Large of frame and military in bearing, he made an impressive speaker.

No wonder that eight of his children became teachers as did many of his grandchildren in public schools and universities at home and abroad, one of them as Superintendent of the Indian School of the Sac and Fox reservation,





another in the Philippines, and another in China. Among them are a Presbyterian minister and a Presbyterian missionary, business and professional men, and ranch owners in Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, and California. Among them are volunteers in defense of their native land in times of war, and in times of peace citizens who, knowing that a man lives not for himself but for his generation, accept the heritage of the past, add to it, and push forward into the future, alert to take responsibility for America.

## WITH REUBEN DAVIS IN KANSAS

1887

In 1887 the call to adventure came from a new Kansas frontier—Haskell County, Western Kansas. Forty miles it lay from the Santa Fe railroad, a forty-mile step back to pioneer thinking and pioneer living with stark realities.

This time came the call not to a young man but to one of 64, Reuben Davis. One might think he had earned the right to stay on his Illinois farm of 171 acres, part of the old homestead of his father, Nehemiah 2nd. Had he not volunteered to serve his country in the Mexican War and the Civil War? With Company E, United States Infantry, from April 1847 to August 1848 he had engaged in the chief battles of the Mexican campaign. With Company E, Eighty-seventh Illinois Volunteer Infantry, he had served in the Quarter-master Department, the ambulance corps, and then on the field from August 1862 to the day he was wounded at Vicksburg, June 29, 1863. In December of that year he was honorably discharged because of partial paralysis from his injuries.

Shortly after his return, he took charge of the old homestead that his mother, Mary Allison Davis, might have the protection of one of her children. There he had built a spacious farmhouse with one very large room on the ground floor especially adapted for his mother. There he brought up his children.



But he was one of the rugged, independent characters who see far ahead of the daily grind. His was a vision of the future of America with the boys and girls of every generation equipped to take on responsibility for a sound, democratic community life. And so in 1864 he did what was then an extraordinary thing: he determined to educate his five daughters as well as his three sons, the eight who reached maturity of the eleven born to him. At fourteen, Amelia, his eldest, was the first to go to the "Academy."

Then in 1882 when his pioneer mother died at the age of 93, it was his insight into the adventure of pioneering in government, education, and organized religious life, his understanding of the ideals pioneers transmuted into realities, and his admiration for their initiative and endurance that made him bring up to date old records of the family, preserving traditions of the past 150 years. This account he printed and sent to all the heads of the many family units of his mother's twelve children, an account that unified the family during the following fifty years.

In 1887 at the age of 64 he had around him at home only his wife, Anne Sturman, and his twelve-year-old son, Bob. All the other children had left home for teaching careers, a profession his daughters continued till marriage, one son until he became an editor in Kansas, and the other son a rancher in Texas. Free to begin life anew at 64, he sold the old homestead and turned his face towards the Kansas wind and the Kansas sun-flowers.

By covered wagon Reuben and Bob travelled. Twelve miles southwest of Santa Fe, now a ghost-town of Haskell County, they built on their open prairie claim a "half-dugout." Two and a half feet deep they dug an excavation about 12 feet wide and 20 feet long. Then sod-block upon sod-block, with grass downward, they piled up till a wall six and a half feet high rose, fitted around a door frame and two half-window frames. Two feet thick was that sod-wall, each block 3 inches deep and 12 inches wide. Into the top row to form a gable roof they set edgewise 3 ceiling joists





## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

across which they nailed roofing boards with cracks chinked and the whole overlaid with sod, grass downward.

Dirt floors the half-dugout had, over which straw was spread and above that a rag carpet or matting laid. An ever present current of air caused the carpet to balloon in the center. The tread was a queer sensation!

Later they built their dugout or storm cellar five feet deep, and a sod house entirely above ground with two rooms and full-length windows of luxurious glass. This was the home to which they brought Anne Sturman a few months later when they met her train at Garden City, forty miles north, their nearest trading post. Here they lived for five years, until lumber could be imported for a real frame house, or a house bought and moved from the claim of some discouraged, departing settler, who hitched up and left after one lost crop.

Grim and desperate were those early years. Very cruel was the first winter, thirty degrees below zero in January! Chickens were frozen, cows and horses lost ears or life. Then when the March sun tempted the prairies to flaunt green grass, there rode in from the north a raging blizzard. It took tough fibre to face that first year and challenge impending defeat to turn into victory!

Even more cruel the next summer was the prairie fire. As a fire-guard, Reuben and Bob had plowed a ten-foot strip around the fields in which the buildings stood. But never can Bob forget the great, brownish copper-colored cloud, boiling up one day on the southwest horizon! Grass afire! Their neighbors doomed! Settler after settler, dotted sparsely over those vast spaces, saw with horror the warning flung wide across the sky! Everyone who owned a water-wagon raced to aid their distant neighbors. Finally the fire was conquered.

After Anne and Reuben had settled down, four daughters and a son came out to teach and file claims to 160 acres apiece. In a gay, challenging mood, Amelia named her sod house, "Desolation!" The landscape looked it! Sod house, level prairie, short-grass, sky!





## KANSAS

Elda promptly filed, also, a "timber-claim" of 160 acres granted free by the Government to settlers guaranteeing to plow and plant ten acres of it in trees, and cultivate the trees ten years. Cottonwood, poplars, and locust they usually were, hauled at least forty miles and often farther! Before moving near her parents, she had paid the Government the pre-emption filing fee of two dollars for her quarter section of 160 acres in another county, and after living on it six months received her deed on payment of \$200. But it was miles away! In fact, her nearest woman neighbor lived 42 miles off!

Today as one motors over the vast open prairies, still the pioneer pattern persists! Vast expanses of level land for a thousand miles; a vast expanse of sky with a panorama of clouds drifting slowly from horizon to horizon against the deep blue; at long intervals a small frame house surrounded by a tree-brake against snow and storm; off to one side a square ten-mile acre of trees! Never-ending seems the pattern save as one's eye follows at rare intervals a narrow water-course thinly outlined by trees and bushes. For three days one may motor in this vastness of skyland and slowly ascending plateau before one sees the foothills rolling up to the Rockies.

"Desolation" one might call it in bravado! But the gay, courageous spirit within ran as high as any in the country. A vision burned in every pioneer heart: a vision of giant fields under cultivation to become the granary of America!

It was Bob who noticed, one spring day of 1888, what looked like rye. He carried it to his father. His father saw the significance: southwestern Kansas was natural wheat-land! Two hundred miles east that summer he sent a team to bring a load of wheat-seed. From that wheat-seed, bought with his Civil War pension money, he raised seed for the ranchers staking claims around. He had to store it in a room in his house in order to prevent ground squirrels from making raids on it. Wheat became the burning topic of the day. Years of prosperity followed for southwest Kansas.





## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

It was prosperity earned by time, patience, and endurance, a great trinity of power for men.

When Bob was a boy, there was no bread unless his mother baked it in the pipe-oven of a "monkey stove" with "cow-chips" for fuel or dried stalks of corn or cane or corn cobs. There was no butter unless Bob churned it as one of his chores, no meat unless his father killed, cut, and cured it, for grocery and butcher-shops were two days' journey away and two back, money scarce, and prices exorbitant. There was no water for five years unless hauled from a hand-dug well 217 feet deep, a mile and a half away. Often Bob drove a team of horses or slow-plodding oxen to the well, and lowered a long rope at the end of which dangled a fifteen-gallon keg. That filled through a bottom valve, and the horses or oxen pulled it up.

Nor was the sod schoolhouse always the most comfortable place to study. Out on the prairies insects were the worst enemy! Much worse were they than the gray wolves and bob-cats at night or the coyotes' howling. Much worse were they than the fine herd of 75 to 80 antelopes he skirted mornings on his way to school. The worst imp of all the insects was the flea, bred from preying upon innumerable ground squirrels and jack rabbits. When fleas became too pestiferous in the sod walls, down came the sod schoolhouse to be burned, and up went a new one.

Bob's house had glass panes in the windows. That was rather swanky forty miles from the railroad. Most of the settlers in the early days tacked white muslin over their window-frames. Soap the women made from the soap-weed, or yucca, mixing the root with ashes for lye. Very useful was the yucca, for its leaves could be braided into hats for men and women.

Going into town was the greatest treat prairie children had. On Decoration Day and Fourth of July all the families around drove the 12 miles to Santa Fe in wagons, or dashed in on bronchos, to take part in the patriotic exercises. Very rarely children were permitted to drive the 40 miles to Garden City when their parents took time off every two or





three months to stock up provisions. By starting early in the morning and driving late at night, one could make the round trip in three days. If the prairie trails were muddy or snow-covered, it took four days.

If the March blizzard of 1888 was bad in Kansas, the February one of 1893 was worse. It was Reuben's grandchildren who bore the brunt of that. The morning dawned mild and bright. They went to school without extra wraps. Reuben went to Santa Fe for mail, groceries, and news.

Before noon, the sky turned murky brown. The sun looked like a full moon in a yellow fog. "Children," said the teacher, "it's only 11 o'clock. But eat your lunches quickly! A blizzard is coming! You must rush home. If home is too far, go to the nearest house. Hurry! Hurry!"

Reuben's grandchildren gulped down their lunches and rushed out of the door towards home with the others. "Hurry! Remember to go into the nearest house when snow begins to fall!" called the teacher after them.

But before they had gone far, the wind shifted to the north. A few seconds more, and a hurricane was upon them! Huddling into a bunch, they wound their arms around each other to keep from blowing away. Dust and dirty dry snow pelted them like needles. Their Aunt Celeste's house was only a few hundred yards away. Slowly the whole group pushed ahead to the driveway, battered one way and another by the wind, almost losing their grip on one another. Huddling closer, pushing and struggling a few inches at a time, stopping for breath for one more effort, encouraging each other, finally they made the driveway. So dark was it that they could not have seen their way if the lights in the house had not guided them.

Once inside, the children were first counted to see that none in the group were lost, and at once rubbed and given warm drinks. Then all lights were blown out as a safety measure. This was no time to risk a fire! Down to zero the temperature catapulted. The wind shrieked around the corners of the house. Windows rattled. A fine powdered snow sifted into the rooms.





## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

During the afternoon, the fathers of neighboring children came, bundled up so that their own youngsters could not recognize them except by their voices. They brought comforts to wrap over and around their youngsters for the trip home. Grandfather Reuben also came in, stamping off the snow, glad he had supplies for the next week.

By morning the ground was far beneath the snow, and drifts over the fences. For three weeks there was no school. Deep snow and cold held all indoors. Milking was a terrible chore. Many lost stock. Only around a cozy fire was it warm. In the bedrooms noses and feet were frost-bitten, and everyone had colds.

One compensation that three-week period of near-zero weather brought—the mirage! Each morning came a thrill! Distance was erased by magic. But with the rising sun, all vanished, leaving each household alone again in a vast field of snow.

Cowboy stories, too, Bob heard, and occasionally when older he rode with some cowboys he knew and listened to their songs. The picturesque round-up he often saw in the cow-country that stretched southwest of his wheatland home for hundreds of miles.

Once a year the owners cooperated to identify their stock and select for the market. As the day approached, the cowboys would make great circles on horseback, around the cows, driving them slowly to the center of the grazing grounds. Then as the herds came in, the calves would follow the mothers to the branding pens, there to be marked with brands, some registered in brand-books dating from colonial days.

The yearlings would be cut out from the herd of Short-horns, Polled Angus, Herefords, and Galloways, and penned by themselves. There they could be identified by their owners' brands. Then for the yearlings came the long drive with cowboys to protect them from dangers like cattle thieves, until delivered to new owners or railroad cattle cars.

With responsibility over, into cowtowns the boys would gallop, there often to gamble their earnings away, and



sometimes to shoot each other down as if law and order did not exist! Dodge City, sixty miles from Bob's home, was one of their favorite haunts. Today Boot Hill stands there, a silent reminder of the days gone even before Reuben went to Kansas, when men were shot and buried with their boots on.

When finally sufficient settlers came to southwest Kansas for rural delivery to be established, Bob for a time became the mail carrier. But by that time "pioneer" days were memories. Frame houses, barns, good wells with wind-mills, close neighbors, farm implements, schools, and churches had made the country so prosperous that the Santa Fe railroad built a branch to care for the wheat being shipped out, wheat Reuben Davis had introduced into the County.

After the railroad had come, one day Reuben Davis and Anne Sturman took a 400-mile trip to a Kansas town where a daughter and grandchildren lived. When they arrived at the house, his grandchildren chanced to be away on an errand, not guessing the surprise waiting for them.

"By the light of the big moon hanging like a lantern in an open sky," writes a granddaughter, "two children sped along a high sidewalk toward their cottage home.

"Here they stopped in amazement, for upon the steps where they usually found mother was an old man with long gray whiskers. Hand in hand they went slowly forward, each step slower than the one before. No one else was in sight!

"'Are you Moses?' asked the little girl.

"'No,' replied the old gentleman, 'I am Elijah.'

"'Oh, I know! You are my grandfather and your name is Reuben,' exclaimed the small boy, 'cause my name is the same!'

"Laughingly the old man answered, 'You got me there, boy. Your mother and grandmother are inside. Run along in if you wish.'

"But the little girl crept to his side. 'Tell me a story about you and Elijah,' she begged. And the old man replied,





## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

'My child, 'tis true. All my life I have fed on the crumbs because I never wanted to be a Moses, but don't let Ma hear you say that, for we have never agreed on that subject.'

"Thus I met Reuben Davis, who was then past seventy. His hands shook with palsy, his body was wracked with life's struggles. But there was a twinkle in his eye which the shaggy, over-hung eyebrow could not hide. He was one of the great characters who see the vision beckoning far above the daily round, and with deed upon deed build America!"

## WITH BOB IN KANSAS

1939

Fifty-two years went by. Bob was 64. As for his father, so for him, at 64 life began anew! The Spectre of the Dust Bowl hung over the landscape shrouded in a pall that turned day into night!

Against his memory of settling on the prairie at 12 in high hope so generously fulfilled for fifty years, there flashed the withering picture of the desolation of 1939—real desolation.

Land drying up after ten years of little rain and dwindling subterranean streams, soil driven like light flakes in high banks against breaks meant to hold back the snow that rarely falls, trees and cattle dying, the people deserting the land! What of the pioneer vision now?

"Poor type of citizens, hirelings of success, to scuttle away in face of this!" he exclaimed with fierce scorn. "They have no love for the Kansas wind even though it throws dust into the face! No love for the Kansas sun-flowers!"

On he talked, his fiery denunciation of dwindling recent settlers mingled with praise for the old pioneers still standing by. Tremendous convictions on the real values of life were punctuated with a bubbling sense of humor and a contagious laugh at the humorous side of life in a dust-bowl.

Seated in the home he owns, a house stripped of paint





cut off by the sharp wind-hurled dirt, he pointed at doors and windows weather-stripped always, and in the blows packed with wet paper. Yet in spite of such precautions his daughter can sweep up two pounds of good soil in two rooms after a medium blow.

"God meant pioneers to earn their livelihood in many ways," he continued, "and not to be too particular which way at any time so long as it's honest. Master one way and be as proficient in as many others as you can! And above all, don't be afraid to be a servant one day even if you have been a master the day before!"

Then followed a story of a nephew, owner of 400 acres once fertile, equipped with the most modern machinery and plenty of man-power. Today that acreage is a worthless dust-heap, blown hither and yon like chaff. Once that nephew had a side-business of agricultural machinery. Today he holds between \$20,000 and \$25,000 worth of notes due to him but unpayable.

"And today he is a servant," continued the father. "His master is his own best friend and cousin, a man once in debt to him. Twenty-four hours a day they work on a caterpillar tractor that never stops, night or day, in rebuilding Kansas. His cousin owns the tractor and contracts with the Government and State to turn up the sub-soil, deep buried beneath, to replant it on the surface. Kansas agriculture and land will survive! This dust bowl cannot conquer us!"

"And today I am a servant," he said. "Twice in my life God has guided me in such a signal way that I could not doubt. He directed me to leave the land for the Santa Fe railroad shops. Then I did not know why. Now I know. He meant my salary and pension to be the mainstay of my own family and the families of pioneers for three generations while they rebuild Kansas! We pioneers alone know what friendship and hospitality mean! Not one pioneer, or son, or grandson of a pioneer among my acquaintances shall go on relief as long as I live!"

A simple, friendly way he worked out, a manly way as man to man. To the sick and homeless he opened his





home till health and work could be attained—on condition of a certain pledge. To those without work and penniless, he loaned small amounts in slack periods on their word of honor without interest—on condition of that same pledge. That pledge was a promise to search for work, to accept the first honest work found, and never to go on relief!

If his own salary was exhausted before the end of the month, as sometimes happened, the local bank would loan him the necessary amount on his personal note without an endorser, knowing the purpose of the loan was to maintain community morale. "I have always paid my notes when due," he ended, "and the men have always paid their debts as soon as they found the next honest job. But I never could see why the bank would lend me money without an endorser," he mused thoughtfully. "What? 'Magnificent piece of citizenship?' No, just pioneer friendship! The men were worth it. Those who stay on the land have it in them to be pioneers still! They know how to love the Kansas wind and the Kansas sun-flower!"

And today, according to government reports, part of that dust bowl "stands so high with corn and wheat that it laughs and sings" to mishandle the Psalmist's phrase.

To Bob, friendship carried within it an implication to maintain enterprise and initiative in others as in himself, and to stand by in adversity without pauperizing a fellow man or lowering his respect. No farther away than his own community he found the resources and like-minded men to cooperate for the morale of the town. And that is part of the meaning of democracy, the meaning of Americanism.

"I am among you as one who serves," runs a paradox of the Master, himself a pioneer. Was it because He well knew that the man who can with equal grace be master and servant derives the power from an intuition of the simplicity of the soul, a love for craftsmanship in all types of work, joy in "the wind that bloweth" and "the flower that fadeth," and a loyalty to one's neighbor as to oneself?





ON TO TEXAS, COLORADO,  
OKLAHOMA, AND CALIFORNIA





## TO TEXAS THE BECKS PIONEERED

1878

At seventeen the bride of a pioneer, Alice Victoria bade good-bye to her father, Captain Grasson DeWitt, and the family home on Owl Creek near Humboldt, to board a train for Texas on her wedding trip with Jairus Preston Beck. He had already pioneered at sixteen from Indiana to Kansas, and she at five from Illinois to the land of the sunflowers with her mother, Emilia. They were both twice pioneers, bred in the tradition!

At twenty he entered with her the Lone Star State with its thirty years under the Stars and Stripes still slumbering under the Spanish and Mexican spirit of *mañana*, and with scarcely one inhabitant to the square mile of its stupendous length and breadth. As far as Sherman the train carried them. From there by wagon and mules Jairus drove forty miles to the land he had bought three years before.

From the beginning he dared the impossible in the teeth of a prophecy of defeat from old-timers. He built his house not as they advised—along the river bank with acreage for farming in the low bottoms. Instead, he and Alice selected a homesite on a hill surrounded by their 150 acres of prairie land, bought at \$4 an acre. To buy lumber sufficient for a two-room house, he drove an ox-team to Sherman, a round trip of three hot days. Once, uncontrollable from thirst, the oxen dashed, lumber and all, into a watering pond! Every length of that lumber had to be lifted off the wagon before the oxen could drag it from the mire. But, admiring his pluck, the neighbors, more warm-hearted than their predictions of disaster, rallied to help build the home and later the log barns for stock and feed.

Scarcely had the little house been completed than spring-planting time arrived. With only primitive plows, the neighbors had never heard of breaking new land and planting a crop immediately. One year, at least, they worked their





acres before seeding. But Jairus had purchased the first sulky plow in Cook County. All the old settlers flocked over to his house to watch the straight rows of clumps of dirt roll into place. They thought a ten-acre field large when wheat and oats were reaped with hand-cradles, tied into bundles, and stacked by hand. It was! Jairus could not deny that! But he bought the first twine binder in North Texas and the first steam thrasher engine, that together made a 100-acre tract look small.

With his 100 acres seeded, came the problem of fencing it to keep out the cattle of the ranchmen, accustomed to having their great herds roam over the prairies at will and reach water holes in any direction. Jairus Beck was an aggravation to them with his continuous five mile trips to Elm River to haul logs for a rail fence, while Alice, mounted on her pony, patrolled the 100 acres to keep cattle out. But a much worse aggravation did he become, after the rail fence was up, by buying more prairie land and fencing it with barb wire, just on the market, with a sharp cutting edge warning away cattle! At night the ranchmen cut down his wire fences. In the day-time he repaired with perfect good nature. They got tired before he did, and finally left him alone.

Even in the first few busy months, Jairus took time out to join all the men in building the first community school-house, to be used, also, for social gatherings and church services. There in the years following, they took part in the pie suppers, spelling bees, and square dances, driving miles in an open wagon—equipped, after eighteen months, with quilts and blankets like those of their neighbors! Then their first baby, a son, could sleep comfortably as other children did, while the men took turns standing guard over the sleeping kindergarten, and the rest took part in the business and fun of community life.

Many topics they touched upon at those social events, and many thrilling stories they heard. There they met Mrs. Koozer, a captive of the Indians for five days. The raiding Indian band had made her drive her horse repeatedly





through a raging river to ferry across, one by one, the horseless Indians of their party, riding behind her on her horse. Once, when the Indians were camping, she escaped and hid in the bushes. But they found her and would have beaten her to death, had not a brave interfered to save her life, when consciousness was almost gone. Meantime, the State Indian Scouts from Fort Sill were searching for her. After five days they rescued her.

Then Mr. Piper, a neighbor, frequently repeated the exciting tale of the last swift broncho riders, dashing from settler to settler to warn of Indians coming, only two years before Jairus and Alice arrived. With his sons, Mr. Piper rode pell-mell to round up his big herd of horses and drive them into the corrals before the Indians could overtake them. But back in the distance they saw an approaching cloud of dust. The faster they urged the horses, the faster the cloud neared them until the shape of horsemen confirmed their fears. Horse after horse dropped out with the pace.

"Let them go!" yelled Mr. Piper to his sons. "Rush the rest!"

The pursuing horsemen gained. At last their equipment and riding became visible. It was the Indian Scout Troop, thinking the Pipers were Indians stealing the herd, and trying to stop them!

Mr. Piper's buildings and herd were spared, but many other settlers saw their homes go up in flames that day, and their horses and cattle driven away.

Finally with his ranch running smoothly, Jairus aroused the community on the subject of roads. He had reason to. Texas, unlike other states of the Union, had never been surveyed into sections, and had no provision whatever for public roads! In fact, under the old Mexican grants, homesteaders and buyers had gerrymandered the best of the land in all forms and shapes, some even in a V or a T, and all roads existing followed the eccentric boundary lines as suited the owner, if it suited him to build at all. Worse still, any land owner could put up a wire fence to close his private road at will. Frequently Jairus and the other settlers would





start for Gainesville, only to find the road newly blocked. That meant picking a path over some rough prairie land or retracing miles to reach one's destination. In time, nearly every one blocked almost everyone else, all in the name of keeping one's pastures intact!

Saddling his horse one day, Jairus made the rounds to call on every settler between his home and Gainesville, five miles away. With him he carried a petition, asking all concerned to donate land for a public road to be owned and maintained by the public. After patient arguing with the short-sighted who at first refused, sufficient owners signed. Then the men celebrated by themselves building the first real road in that region, and even signed the petition of Jairus for rural mail delivery on the new road!

But when it came to a bridge over Elm River, the old-timers were obdurate. Everyone had forded that stream since the Spaniards explored that country in 1692! Why a bridge? Single-handed, Jairus cut down the steep banks at the ford, banks that strained the horses to push back the suddenly descending scraper plunging into the precipitous current, and took every ounce of their strength to pull up a load with difficulty over the opposite bank. A few years later, Jairus and his family nearly lost their lives at the ford. A cloudburst had turned the water into deep and swift rapids. With the near-tragedy vivid in his mind, Jairus again circulated a petition. Fifty signed this time. A steel bridge was built, used to this day.

The biggest obstacle in 1878, however, and for many years afterwards, was the cattle rustler. Outlaws and fugitives from other states, the rustlers were mostly. Across the Red River from the Indian Territory they would come wildly galloping on their raids, round up the cattle on the Texas ranches, murder the owners if convenient, and drive the cattle off. Since Jairus confined himself to grain-raising, keeping only a few head of cattle, he was not attacked. But he shared the indignation of his neighbors, helped hunt the outlaws with the Sheriff's posse, and turned them over to the law, if they did not shoot it out first.





## ON TO TEXAS, COLORADO, OKLAHOMA, AND CALIFORNIA

Ten years passed. The little two-room cottage gave place to a large, ten-room white house gracing the hill-top, with a lane bordered by cedar trees leading to the main road, a quarter of a mile away. From that house they saw their three sons and their daughter marry. There they watched the country develop.

At 65, Jairus could have retired to a life of leisure with Alice. Instead, after forty-five years in Cook County, they pulled up stakes and pioneered to a newly opened part of Texas, the fertile delta of the Rio Grande, with its orange groves.

Today Jairus and Alice are 85 and 82. Still burns within them the old fervor of the pioneer spirit! Did Ponce de Leon, in searching for the fountain of eternal youth, not know that its spirit lies in pioneering?

## IN EARLY COLORADO DAYS 1908-1912

To live 75 miles from a railroad in early Colorado days on a 500 acre apple and cherry ranch might in itself seem pioneering with no electricity, telephone, or telegraph, and mail once a week. But four children, a husband and hired men to feed should keep a woman too busy to care perhaps, one might think. Then came the real test to Alice Parmley Boom. A doctor's order to give up her sheltered life as mother and wife to cure her T. B.! And what a prescription he gave her: an outdoor life of activity away from home!

Picture her driving four horses and a truck, hauling freight 75 miles to the railroad! Three and a half days it took each way, with six nights at boarding houses on the road and one night at home a week. Through blizzards at 14 degrees below zero she drove with a lighted lantern in the bearskin rugs about her feet, and silk-lined bearskin gloves on her hands. Through pelting rain or heat, winter and summer, when roads were little more than trails over





## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

grass and rocks except when they followed stream-beds and splashed through water and over boulders and pebble-strewn bottoms! When the trail led through precipitous mountains along a ledge with steep walls of rock on one side and a ravine on the other, one groove for the off-wheels would be cut into the rock, and the inside wheels could wander amiably where possible. It was a one-way trail at that, with turn-outs. Truck horses were belled by regulation. Intently the drivers listened for other bells, warning one to stop at the nearest turn-out.

Paradox Valley to Placerville the route ran. Beside her sat her father-in-law to manage clerical matters. Seventy-eight years old he was when she started the "cure" which brought in, at \$1.50 a hundred pounds, sometimes \$100 a week. With her in summer rode one of her children occasionally.

The worst day of the whole "cure" for her was the second day of a blizzard one terrible winter. At breakfast in the boarding-house she sat listening to the talk of other freight drivers. It was suicide to attempt driving, they were saying. The iron rims of the wheels would skid over the icy rocks and bog in the drifts. One man announced his intention to stay over until the snow stopped, and then hire a crew to cut, at dangerous spots in the ice, ruts deep enough to prevent wheels from slipping. He did. It was three days before he reached home!

As she rose from the breakfast table, the inn-keeper asked her to step into his private office. "I saw you take in what the men were saying," he ventured. "Do you want to get home tonight?"

"I must," she replied. "My husband and children will worry if I don't."

"For three years I have watched you drive," he continued, "and I know you can handle your horses as few people can. If you have the nerve to carry out a tip I can give you, I believe you can reach home tonight." Then he explained in detail a daring but sure way around icy mountain curves.





## ON TO TEXAS, COLORADO, OKLAHOMA, AND CALIFORNIA

Off she started with her father-in-law against the protest of men shaking their heads lugubriously at the window—all except the inn-keeper.

Where possible she let the horses feel out the trail themselves, old timers as they were. But at mountain curves she literally held the whip-hand. At the first one, furiously she whipped the lead off-horse as if she were going to kill him, just as her mentor had directed. Around the curve he dashed, wildly pushing the near horse against the protecting mountain wall. Safe! As they rounded the first bend, she dared steal one glance at the rear off-wheel. It was swinging out over the precipice as she had been warned! But back it came on the trail. After that, she dared not look backwards. But she did not need to. The tip worked!

Twenty miles from home she met her husband with a team coming to look for her.

At the end of four years the doctor pronounced her cured. Today, seeing her a buxom and matronly figure with her grandchildren around, one is amazed at the efficacy of the doctor's prescription. It worked! Nor did the family unity suffer. She is the adored advisor of the family circle.

Years after the "cure", she returned her indebtedness to a man for the tip, by giving a tip to men on how to stack oats. The First World War was on. The oat crop had been prolific in Colorado in 1915 and was needed by the Army. But the stackers had all been called to the colors. When the owners tried to stack the oats, the stacks pyramided to the ground, flat as pancakes. Apparently the crop would lie and rot! Her husband despaired of the situation.

There flashed through her mind a scene in an Illinois oat field when she was ten. She was out watching her father stacking oats. Wearily he sat down to rest. Just ten days later he was to die of T.B., but she was too young to know that. "Dick," he said, calling her pet name, "if I should tell you how to stack the oats for mother, do you think you would be strong enough to do it?"

"Of course, daddy," she had exclaimed, running over



to him. And the rest of the day she had stacked oats as he lay on the ground supervising her.

"I'll show you," she said to her husband. But it was twenty-four hours before he would let her try! Then she put up seven stacks in the presence of the owners of the neighboring ranches. They took a picture of the scene to present to her. "To think," they commented, "a woman would have to show us that!"

Her husband as a boy had also known pioneer life. Eighteen miles he used to drive an ox-cart to what is now Kansas City, Kansas, to buy their provisions. Just three log cabins stood there then, one the combined postoffice and home where mail came three times a week, another the store, and the third a home. A few years later when he was attending school in a distant town, he described his prairie experiences to his teacher. "Yes," she replied, "I know the place well. You see, I am the daughter of the postmaster there!"

Many Indians used to pass by his home, most of them friendly, some hostile. But they all called his Scotch mother, Rachel Buchanon, "The Great White Mother" and made a point to call upon her and eat the soup she always had ready for them in the pot by the fireplace. She was influential with them because they trusted her. She trusted them.





## OKLAHOMA

The Cherokee Strip . . . . .	1893
The Oil Boom . . . . .	1914





## THE CHEROKEE STRIP

September 16, 1893

One hundred thousand people milling around four points on the northern Oklahoma border and drifting along the line! Facing them 60 miles south, tens of thousands along the southern line of the Cherokee Strip! One hundred thousand and more people on foot, horseback, in wagons—covered, buckboard, and spring—ox-drawn and horse-drawn! Railroad trains puffing at south and north borders, 42 cattle cars long, jammed within, on platforms, and on roofs with passengers, waiting the signal! Dust thick in the air that September 16, swirled in the faces of the multitude by the cool northeast wind after a dry, hot month of waiting in camps behind the lines! The murmur of voices rose deep behind the Strip! Suddenly an appalling, tense silence on the approach of twelve noon! Solitary troopers stationed along the two lines confronting the masses with pistols upraised! Twelve noon! A salvo of shots in the air! A sudden low hum of voices, wheels, hoofs, and feet rushing forward into the Cherokee Strip, a hum rising into the roar of a cyclone! The Cherokee rush was on! At noon, 9,000 square miles of land almost unpopulated! At sunset 100,000 settlers with claims staked! The most exciting and spectacular settlement in the history of pioneering!

Flavius DeWitt made that rush with his brother-in-law behind a good team of ponies. On they headed to the Salt Fork River. But though they made good time, every bit of land there had been "soonered." Rascally schemers, evading the vigilance of the troopers, had slipped into the Strip before the 16th, had hid in ravines or timber to arise suddenly like grasshoppers on the 16th, pretending they had just arrived! "Sooners," they were called. It was October 12 before he found an unpreëmpted claim near the present town of Fairview, about 57 miles below the border.



## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

Before the Rush, Flavius and his family had lived in Winfield, Kansas, on one of the three main travelled roads leading down to Arkansas City. Just below there, the Federal Government had set up one of its booths to register those who desired to enter the Strip on the 16th. Weeks before that date, the family had watched the procession choke the road, sometimes 600 wagons in a day, each with two or three persons.

Ten days before the Run, Flavius and his brother-in-law left home for the registration booth at Arkansas City. So many thousands upon thousands they saw waiting there, living in their wagons and tents, that they travelled on west to the next booth at Hunnewell. That looked like an equally impenetrable city jungle of wagons, horses, small tents, and humanity. Caldwell and Kiowa were still farther west. But any better? They decided to take their chances at Hunnewell.

They joined the rear of the double line stretching away from the booth. In the boiling sun and dust raised by thousands of feet, they waited three days and a half before their turn came to enter the booth, watching many faint with the heat and one die. In fact, Flavius fainted one day just as he reached camp. But the inborn American genius of organization tackled the situation. The long lines organized into squads of ten with a captain who knew the names and location of his men. Thereafter, nine out of ten could relax until their names were called for registration.

One other difficulty they tackled, too. Word was passed down the line that some slackers, to avoid the long wait, were bribing the soldier, stationed on duty at the entrance of the booth, from three to five dollars to slip them through the door out of turn.

The people in line sent word to the clerks to stop the practice or they would tear down the booth! With but few clerks and soldiers against thousands of applicants, nearly all armed, the trouble at once ceased. In reality the





## OKLAHOMA

people showed typical American humor and common sense in handling the situation by a straight-talking delegation instead of by rioting.

On the day of the Race, Flavius saw tragic and humorous episodes by the score. Everyone had some exciting adventure to tell afterwards in that rushing throng flooding over five and a half million acres. One shrewd old-timer beside them at the start had only oxen and a plow. Everyone around speculated how far he would get with that equipment in a race to the swift. At the pistol shot, calmly he stepped over the line, put his plowshare into the earth, and began to plow! His claim was allowed a few days later when he turned up at the Land Office with his registration slip. Two wagons near Flavius were overturned by the madly surging crowd and the occupants killed. Many there were who turned back the same day, shaking the dust of Oklahoma forever from their feet, and many who merely speculated in land to sell their claims in boom fashion at pyramided prices. But the great majority were honest pioneers, intent either on lots in towns that sprang into existence a thousand and more strong on the night of the 16th, or intent on farm land.

The real testing time came after claims were filed in the Land Offices at \$1.50 per acre—sometimes after law suits with several claimants! Then people faced the problem of shelter, food, and work. Flavius and his family were no exception. Aside from the equipment he carried in, he had exactly two pennies in money. Housing was solved by living with his brother-in-law about a mile and a half from his claim. Food was partly solved by trading a pony for two young cows to furnish milk and butter. Income he solved by giving in winter time a two-hour entertaining lecture with a magic lantern and 100 slides on a round-the-world trip. However hard the times in the beginning years, people were always ready to pay for entertainment, and rapidly built schoolhouses and churches that opened to him.





## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

In his education and ability to lecture he was fortunate at a time when settlers searched for work at 25 and 50 cents a day and often went hungry. In summers he farmed and raised crops.

Food, however, was not a matter of cash in the pioneering stage; it was a matter of crops and resources to handle them. Flavius had to see his family go three weeks without bread because no mills had been built and the nearest railroad from which to haul provisions was forty miles away. They lived those three weeks on Kaffir corn meal, made by grinding Kaffir corn in an old hand coffee mill. He has never liked Kaffir bread since! Meats and fruits, too, the few provision stores were short of. "We now sometimes wonder how we managed to live through," he writes, "but oftener wish more pioneering could be done!"

Four new dangers faced the settlers coming from settled communities with law and order long established. The least was wild animals. Cougars, bears, and coyotes molested their live stock and chickens, and deer ate their tender young crops, while rattlesnakes, ten feet long, often with fangs an inch long, made walking dangerous. A second threat was prairie fires. At first, settlers unaccustomed to prairies neglected to watch their open campfires and sometimes burned out their neighbors as well as themselves.

Several times, too, Indians threatened them. On the claim adjoining that of Flavius, two to three hundred Cheyennes camped for a long time. But they were very friendly, fortunately, and never molested the white family.

Down on the Agency Cantonment, however, about 16 miles southwest on the North Canadian River, the Arapahoes and Cheyennes both several times threatened trouble for the white newcomers. The young Indian braves, it was, who wanted the warpath, and the older Indian fighters who held them in check by a counter threat. "If you make war," said the old braves, "we'll join the pale faces and fight against you." The reason they gave was that, though the





## OKLAHOMA

United States Army might be miles away, every settler was armed and ready to fight at a moment's notice. "You can be wiped out in three days," the older warriors cautioned. Nor did these Indians have any quarrel with the settlers on the land question. Not they but the Cherokees had lived in the Strip and no longer than 65 years at the most. The Cherokees sold the land to the Government for \$8,300,000 or approximately \$1.50 an acre, besides receiving allotments of lands elsewhere.

The fourth danger, the settlers faced about two years after their arrival. Outlaws began to be troublesome. It was their last frontier. "They would ride up to a settler's house or dug-out and demand a meal," writes Flavius. "After that was given them, they would seize coffee, meat, or any extra food in the house they wanted. If they needed a horse or saddle, they would take any that suited them. The settlers, of course, would not submit to this. They organized either to kill or run the outlaws out of the country. Those that gave us most trouble were Yeager, Black, Shoemaker, Freeman, and Tobe. They killed two or three settlers before the settlers finally ran them down and killed them." So here, as on some other frontiers, vigilantes established rough justice until they could establish regular channels of law and order.

## THE OIL BOOM: 1914

In 1853 American opinion of oil can be summed up in this report from a Federal Indian Agent on the Choctaw "oil springs" located in what is now Oklahoma.

"The oil springs in this nation are attracting considerable attention, as they are said to be a remedy for all chronic diseases. Rheumatism stands no chance at all, and the worst cases of dropsy yield to its effects. The fact is that it cures everything that has been tried."

About 40 years later in March, 1897, the first drilled oil well came in, 150 barrels a day from a depth of 1400





feet, at Bartlesville. Forgotten was the rheumatism cure! Black gold had come!

But not until March, 1912, was the boom on. Then with a roar the Cushing Pool came in, flooding the fields around. The day after, the population of the town of Cushing leaped from 300 to 800, and in a few days more to 6000. Nearby Drumright mushroomed up from a mere post office to a shack and tent town. A dollar a night they charged the men, 80 in one tent, along with their six-shooters. Hundreds of penniless men flocked to the town in search of work, fought for food at the garbage can, and slept on the ground, until derricks rose like a forest to absorb all who came.

Two years after Drumright boomed, arrived Anne Fares and her husband, Sidney Busby, in 1914, then married one year. She was a granddaughter of Sophia Davis Sturman and a great-granddaughter of Mary Allison Davis. To Sid, Drumright seemed a good opening for photography. Here was an opportunity to record in pictures pioneering in the making!

They found no sanitation or health officer, no water except private wells, no adequate police force, no provision for the sudden expansion of population. In dry weather what passed for streets was sprinkled with oil so heavily that no housewife dared use carpets to be ruined in a day by foot tracks. In wet weather a plank served as sidewalk or crosswalk over mud and oil, ankle deep, and horses struggled to pull their loads out of oily ruts and holes. Through that slippery muck it was a common sight to see a little horse-drawn wagon joggling along with a load of nitro-glycerine for the fields to "shoot wells"—a load sufficient to blow up the whole town and everyone in it, had the devil-may-care driver met bad luck.

Very fortunate were Anne and Sid to secure a "good room" in Drumright where houses were unobtainable and where the standard price for every conceivable space called





a room was \$40 a month. Their room was on the ground floor in the hotel, an end front-room, opening on the piazza. Though a new hotel, it was a ram-shackle affair with merely planks to separate rooms around, above, and below. If one wanted to know what was going on in the next room, a knot-hole was handy. If the occupant above spilled water from his pitcher, down it came between the planks into the room below.

Several times a week a horse sale was staged in the very doorway of that room, with a crowd of men reaching into the street. Many a time Sid tried to warn off the porch the drunks with their swearing and rough talk, but either they paid no heed or wanted to fight. Once Anne had better luck. A crash made her spring to the door. An intoxicated driver had knocked the supports from under her end of the piazza, tipping it at such a crazy angle that a drunken man went rolling its length into the mud. Catching sight of Anne at the door, he conjectured that his plight was due to some playful prank of hers! "Hello, kid," he stammered sweetly, throwing her a smile.

Fights were frequent, so frequent that even if a policeman chanced along, he let the contestants settle their own squabbles. Once two burly oil workers staged a fist fight right across the street from Anne's room, in front of the town's one and only bank. So furiously did they belabor each other that a larger crowd than usual jostled and milled about, yelling encouragement. Some onlookers even scrambled to the roofs of nearby buildings for a better view of the affray, Sid among them to take a picture. Unfortunately the bank, like the other buildings, was a frail structure of clapboards nailed to 2x4 studs, never designed as a retaining wall against a torrent of on-rushers. It gave way. When the battle was over, the entire front of the bank was a wreck.

Fist fights provided a longer and more sustained amusement than gun fights. Gunplay was over too quickly. So usual a part of the day's routine were pistol shots that





## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

nobody paid much attention to them except to note if six went off rapidly together. That was the fire signal. But a lone shot or two?

Well, there was a feud between the county sheriff and the Drumright chief-of-police while Anne and Sid lived there. One day when the sheriff happened to be in town, he met the chief-of-police on the street. After a few words they parted. At once the sheriff stepped into a drug store and asked for a rifle, saying he wanted to shoot a skunk and was afraid his revolver would miss at long distance. Out he stepped with his borrowed rifle, took aim at the Chief walking across the street, and shot him in the back, dead. No one tried to bring him to justice then—though a few years after, he was hanged for another offense when his term expired. Gun deaths were common. Of course gambling, liquor, women, and crime flourished, especially at "Over the Hump," where night-life blazed.

But if six rapid shots signalled fire, the whole town forgot its differences and turned out as one man with whatever was at hand to fight fire. Terrible sights, those fires! After a violent electric storm one day, thirteen tanks burned at once. Each held 55,000 barrels of oil. For almost twenty-four hours they blazed until the sides of the tanks melted with the heat, the boiling oil rolled out, flooding the land around and the flames hit the sky! At mid-day, so dense was the smoke that one could look at the sun with naked eye. Sid photographed it. Afterwards it was sad to see men dragging themselves around, swathed in bandages like mummies from burns.

Explosions there were too. One night, several hundred quarts of TNT exploded in a warehouse several miles from town. Not a splinter of the storehouse was left. Where it had stood, only a big hole stared in the ground. Windows and dishes were shattered all over Drumright. Gas wells frequently exploded in the early days of the boom when proper storage was unknown. Often gas would be led off





in pipes merely to escape in the air. One morning, Drumright awoke to find their creek afire! A gas line, ending in the middle of the stream-bed, had ignited, and the flames burst right up through the water! At that period, when men did not know how to cope with oil and gas hazards, fire insurance was refused to Drumright.

It was photographs of such sights that Sid took, photographs printed in newspapers and sold by the scores to townspeople to send to their home folks. Until he could afford to buy a Ford, to take those pictures meant walking as much as 12 and 15 miles a day in blistering hot weather, carrying his photographic equipment. Many times he was nearly ready to collapse on reaching home. At night his developing had to be done with loads of ice in the fixing bath to prevent the gelatine coating on plates, and films from running all over the place, ruining his day's work.

Six trying months they lived in their hotel room, partitioned off for living quarters in the rear, and photographic studio in front. Though on starting they ate off a trunk for lack of money to buy a table, at the end of six months they had saved enough money to buy more photographic equipment, and a lot on which to build a house and shop! Sid had been right in his choice of a town to start a photographic career. Drumright gave them what they asked for, an opportunity to prove their mettle. Besides, they were young and could laugh.

Anne did her share in the shop when Sid was out tramping the fields to take pictures of oil workers, wells, tanks, and bits of local color. Though at first she knew nothing about photography, she valiantly "took a picture," secured the deposit on the transaction to insure the customer's return, and waited for Sid to make an appointment for an honest-to-goodness photo if her negative were terrible, as usually in the beginning it was! Honest and fair in their dealings they were, and artistic in their work. They built up a good business between them, and made many friends.





## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

Along in the afternoon when Anne served tea, their studio was a rendezvous for sometimes as many as forty people at once, a sundry lot from minister, town clerk, and club women to oil hands and gamblers. But a friendly and democratic group it was.

Even boiling water for tea was not as easy as it sounds, nor cooking when the new house was finished. Because natural gas was the town's source of heating, lighting, and cooking, results depended on flow of gas and pressure. That meant some days of freezing in spite of all the wraps one could bundle on, cold victuals to eat, and lights dimming and flaring, as well as days when life ran smoothly.

Finally the town righted itself the American way, with the studio as the setting of much of the interchange of thought leading to action. It was the women who led off. They organized a Civic League of which Anne was secretary the first year and President the second. They secured and equipped a playground for children, opened with a parade, band, and speeches to rally civic pride. They initiated an empty stocking Christmas fund and supplied warm clothing and toys for Christmas baskets. A Humane Society for over-taxed horses, and music and literary clubs followed. When the project was broached to buy a horse-drawn fire engine, the whole community rallied with Sid to direct and act a leading part in a play because of his theatrical experience, and Anne also taking a part. Aply the women supported the men, also, in founding churches, Sunday-schools, and securing good town administration. In all, Drumright is a typical boom town that transformed itself because the people asserted their American heritage of government, church, school, and culture.

Says Glasscock in his book, *Then Oil Came*, "Oil has built great cities—greater than gold has ever built, and apparently more permanent . . . Oklahoma offers the most significant illustration of the astonishing effect of oil upon the civilization which produced it . . . Witness the change



from the ramshackling towns of Tulsa and Oklahoma City as they were a quarter of a century ago into the great, clean, modern, enviable cities that they are today, combining most of the material advantages of a New York with the still adventurous and democratic spirit of the West, and offering a charm and hospitality suggestive of the old days of the South.

"Oil did that; oil and its accompanying wealth used to its fullest possibilities by the men who discovered and produced it . . . No state has built upon oil as Oklahoma has built. Not one reveals the contrasts and drama of life before and after oil as Oklahoma reveals them.

"There, in very truth, oil brought an end to America's last frontier."

The last frontier? Is that the signal for pessimism? Is that the signal for a planned economy and regimentation of individuals? Is that the signal for death to individual American initiative and enterprise?

Or is it a challenge to brains? Not an aristocracy of brains but the commonalty of brains! Brains enlisted everywhere, in the home, the factory, the office, and on the farm; brains willing to undergo the stern discipline of studying how to cooperate in eliminating waste and increasing efficiency! Brains that, instead of rejecting, will accept the heritage of the past in order to add to it treasures for the future! Brains that will explore the significance of earth's resources in terms of scientific advance for the social and economic progress of all! Brains combined with "the feeling eye and the seeing heart" that will open the frontiers of genuine democracy of every kind to every human being in this country and the world!

Is it a challenge to the brains, morale, and the pioneering spirit of each American?





DESERT PIONEERING BELOW SEA LEVEL  
California: 1918

To pioneers, romance is a pillar of fire by night and a beckoning cloud by day. But who shall tell in what romance consists? A sudden flash of insight into how the seemingly impossible may become possible? An inner urge to transform the lifeless clump into wrought-out beauty? A masterful determination to pit one's strength and patience against one crushing blow after another on days when, if a smile is unattainable, grim persistence is invincible? A conviction that none can fail who is the forerunner of the future? The secret only a pioneer knows who girds himself to blaze a new trail.

Romance there is in the setting also, especially a setting which all the world passes by, a setting so elusive and esoteric that only a mystic Aladdin's lamp can illumine the pearl of great price whose finding is worth a shout.

Such a spot Corley and Luther Echols discovered in a forsaken valley that even the Gulf of California had deserted when withdrawing an ancient sea whose water-level line still can be traced on the encircling mountains. Behind, as witnesses, remain myriads of tiny shells. Man adopted for that valley the name by which the departing waters had baptized the land: Conchella, "Little Shells," altered to Coachella.

A tiny spot in the panorama of the globe that valley is, some 70,000 acres set apart from the world, walled in by mountains stark and bare, multi-colored with all the opalescent, ever-changing mist of the sun's rays reflecting the tints of dust and clay.

At the head of the valley stand four mountain gateposts, San Gorgonio 12,800 feet high, San Bernardino 12,500, San Jacinto 10,700, and Santa Rosa 9,000, all with sides gashed by canyons during some prehistoric convulsion.

Snow falls on these gigantic gateways several months





of the year. Melting, it mothers wild streams that dash downward to the valley only to disappear through the light loam into a great rock-bed reservoir, an artesian basin of pure water. When tapped by all the hydraulic ingenuity of man with drills, compressed air, and casings, capriciously it will sally forth so violently that it needs capping, or so coyly that it needs pumping, and sometimes so warm that it needs cooling.

Climate the valley has in plenty, nestling, as it does, from one hundred to two hundred feet below sea level as if seeking its ancient sea and shrinking from the snow-clad heights with all its narrow self, only three to ten miles wide. Except for a bit of the salty, treacherous Salton Sea at its southern border, the valley rarely knows the sight of water even as rain. Usually the middle of the day finds it warm or hot 365 times a year, with dry air and cloudless sky above. But if the sun sometimes smites it with 119-degree heat on a summer day, occasionally the moon smites it with thirteen-degree cold on a winter night.

The wind that blows where it lists is there a desert variety. Somewhere it springs from outside the valley in the great world, and storms violently through the San Gorgonio Pass, accumulating speed and sand on the way until it gains a volume that wins applause for its fierceness. Imagine trying to live, move, and have one's being in an atmosphere thick with dust, travelling at a breakneck pace! When the blow is on, the houses creak, shake, groan, and sway. When the tumult ceases, the deep blue of the sky and the motionless palms serenely affirm the eternal nature of peace.

Here in the Coachella Valley the United State Department of Agriculture caught the vision of transforming a worthless desert into a national asset. Today, 3000 acres of breath-taking, luxurious oases greet the eye in date gardens—the only spot in our country save small plantings elsewhere.





## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

So charming is the picture that one forgets, perhaps, how daring the experiment for the Bureau of Plant Industry to import the romantic date palm from the Old World to the New, and to transplant the 4000-year-old science and culture of dates in Assyria, Persia, and Egypt to a twentieth century environment. But where find a suitable locality? Could the Coachella Valley produce a luscious product to rival commercially what caravans and ships bring annually in great quantities to America? Would pioneers rally to the task? They did.

In date-producing, Luther found pioneering enough to make a man leave a city with all its pleasures and advantages to spend a life studying the culture, food values, and history of dates. In his sister Corley, he found an enthusiastic and able pioneer, the first and constant inspiration of the enterprise. Since the date palm reaches its prime at one hundred years of age, both knew that on their strength and patience would rest the welfare of generations of American growers to come. With something of the sagacity and foresight of their great-grandmother, Judith Davis Boyls, they proceeded. Theirs was the care of the future!

After buying forty acres of desert land, about twenty miles below Palm Springs, Corley and Luther began study and costly experimenting like other date-growing pioneers, even while still in the throes of preparing the land, gathering the equipment, and building.

"A month after the papers were signed giving us possession of our land," says Luther, "Mother and I turned our backs on the city and city ways even before Corley joined us, and started for the land of promise. Mother made the trip first-class by train. I travelled in a box-car with the furniture, lumber for the house, a gravel wagon, and a plow, not to speak of a team of mules, a dog, and a half dozen chickens—all strangers to each other, assembled from the four points of the city just before exodus."

"Although the donkeys had health certificates, one of





them contracted a fatal illness, whether car-sickness, homesickness, or a special mule malady, I know not. I did my best for her. She died. The day of my arrival I spent with that mule. She upset my plans and made me late in beginning the venture. I have been behind time ever since.

"Mother arrived before I did to find, in the nearest small town, not a vacant house. Nothing daunted, she went out on the first truck of lumber to the ranch, and stood in the sun until the carpenter built a temporary shelter with board sides and a canvas roof. That served as kitchen, dining-room, living-room, and mother's boudoir for a week until torn down for our residence of four rooms, with wire netting for doors and windows, covered by canvas at will.

"The small business of erecting a dwelling over for the time being, I started out to find a mule to go with the one I brought through alive. She was in a pasture several miles away. With no means of transit, I walked the eight miles to town. Buying one mule is like trying to buy one shoe; they generally come in pairs. Unsuccessful on my first shopping expedition, I went to my nearest neighbor and asked to borrow a horse to ride or drive. He proved to be a real neighbor in every sense of the word. I borrowed a horse that day and for two successive trips before I found a mule. Since then I have borrowed almost everything on his place. What I did not borrow from him, I borrowed from my other neighbor, for I had only one implement, a plow, and I couldn't plow with it. Nor could I plow with the new mule at once. She fought with the first one and tore up things around. In time I learned to chaperon the two.

"Next I began clearing the land. Mesquite was a problem, hard and tough as iron to chop, so prolific in shoots from the roots that sometimes one bush sprawls over a quarter of an acre, and so oily that when set afire its leaves display magnificent fireworks. I chopped and burned and dug enough to acquaint myself with its disposition. Satisfied





## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

that I would lose money doing it and lose money paying the Indians to do it, I lost both ways.

"But that did not leave me without a job. Real pioneering had just begun. The land had to be levelled and a well dug. With water-works achieved on the third of July that first year of 1918, I declared my independence from hauling two barrels of water daily since our arrival in March.

"After the pump and electric motor had been installed and connected, and water was flowing about 300 gallons a minute from 503 feet below, I thought our water supply troubles were at an end. But not so! That pump developed as many ailments as a teething infant. It got hot at one end and then at the other; the power went off; it lost its prime; the belt broke. Finally I coaxed the pump into fairly good humor.

"Then came the novel adventure of introducing the water to a land unacquainted with it for centuries. By patience and much shoveling of ditches, dams, and furrows, I persuaded the light loam to welcome the water instead of promptly speeding it to the reservoir beneath. Later I laid pipe lines and grove hydrants.

"At last the ground was prepared for alfalfa, milo, and Sudan grass for our live stock, vegetables for ourselves, and dream of all dreams—date palms! But many unseen hands plucked success from our pathway. The pump took a vacation when most needed, the rabbits cut the alfalfa, and the birds gathered the milo."

From there Corley took over the story. "But haven't we ten stately palms waving their feathery leaves in the breezes, and fifty-one shoots in the nursery?" she wrote in 1919. "No little boy was ever prouder of his first red wagon! There stands the nucleus of our dream—a forty acre date garden, forty acres where mesquite has surrendered to palm!

"Imagine how we felt," wrote Corley a year after, "when we lost one of the trees and fifty of the shoots!





The one shoot surviving the nursery treatment we call the \$500 palm, for shoots had a market value of \$10 apiece then. Still believing the Bureau right in prescribing the hot house nursery system, we bought again with better success in rooting but high mortality of shoots. After regaining our breath and courage, again we went to market and bought, at \$20 each, off-shoots left on the parent palm until their own root-system had developed. This time we set them out immediately in the orchard, 30x30 feet apart, 49 to the acre. They grew. It took us six years to establish three acres of palms."

But date palms are temperamental as if never forgetful of their oriental heritage of legend and romance. For eight months of the year they exact personal attention. Their straight lines must be cultivated by tractors, irrigated by power-driven pumps, and pollinated by hand. Their heads must be in the sun and their feet in water. And yet for these strangers, the present generation of date-growers has evolved better methods than the clay tablets and wall sculptures of ancient civilizations reveal.

Take, for instance, the problem of picking from the very crown the 150 pounds each tree can bear when twelve or fifteen years old. Three-year-olds produce a crop easily reached from the ground. For older trees, the picker can stand on a table. Finally come ladders that firemen or acrobats might go in training to climb. With an anxious eye on expense accounts and an inquiring eye on income, Luther invented a solution: a portable platform that can be raised, lowered, and manipulated by two workmen.

"As I look back over the first few years," writes Corley twenty years afterwards, "and recall the long, hot days, the wind and dust, the battle with mesquite and sage brush, the tedious task of levelling the untamed land and supplying artificial rain, the warfare of every type and species of insects, the unnumbered discouragements, I yet know this: all the king's horses and all the king's men cannot drag us away, for we came with a purpose—to raise dates."





## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

"I wonder if the early fathers of our country endured greater hardships? A queer mixture of the old and new we are in this valley. Though the land is just as it has lain for centuries, inhabited by all sorts of wild animals—coyotes, bobcats, snakes, birds—we have electricity with appliances for the home, water piped to the house and corrals, and our latest acquisition, the flivver.

"But these did not come all at once. There were many, many days of carrying water, many nights trying to make coal oil lamps burn in a house without doors and windows save screen wires canvas-covered, many long eight-mile drives to town for provisions with the mule team, one lame."

But still they follow the vision! Looking far into the future, they are content in the conviction that they are building for those coming after. They have the honor of being among the pioneers blazing new trails, making a desert blossom into a productive valley, and building a community.





OUTREACHES OF THE PIONEER  
SPIRIT

IN THE UNITED STATES INDIAN SERVICE

*The Indians and the Family Change*

IN EDUCATION

*A Frontier on the Mountain Top*

IN RELIGION

*These Things Shall be Added*



## THE INDIANS AND THE FAMILY CHANGE

1790-1890

The outbreak of the Indian War of 1790 found Robert Allison and his family in the stockade at Marietta. Massacres, war drums, sentries, cannon, and bullet-moulding—these were the background of true stories experienced, heard, and seen for five years. Indians and family faced each other armed! The less they saw of each other, the better they liked it!

If Robert Allison could have foreseen that exactly 100 years later, in 1890, his great-grandson, Charles Logan Davis, would begin a career in Indian Service leading to the rank of head government officer of all the Indians of the United States under the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, what would have been his reaction? Undoubtedly he would have pictured a second Anthony Wayne to fight and then make a treaty with Indians who had sold their land to the Ohio Company only to repent their bargain! A highly satisfactory prospect, an illuminating instance of dramatic irony in history, he might have mused! A just compensation for what the family had suffered! Perhaps he was forgiving enough to add a wish for better relations between the Indians and his great-grandson.

Yet in 100 years martial contacts between the Government and the Indians had given place to friendly cooperation. The great-grandson who for twenty years was chiefly responsible for developing policies of cooperation, wrote, "My official relations were most pleasant with the Indian populations." If the Marietta pioneers could not have understood, his co-workers did, as for 36 years they saw him rise in service from bottom to top by sheer executive ability, sympathetic understanding of the Indians, and alertness to aid them in every way.

The task demanded all the vision, daring, and versatility of the pioneer. It involved many aspects: teaching better





## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

farming methods, breeding a better strain of cattle, building saw mills and setting up industries, acting as medical officer, supervising schools and building up attendance, prosecuting white men for violations against Indians, attacking liquor sales to Indians, setting up Indian courts to handle minor offenses, probating estates and legal work, managing a personal office and school force from 25-50 besides hundreds in the field, disbursing from a few thousand to over a million dollars annually, and travelling to inspect reservation work all over the country.

When Charles Davis was born, Illinois had been a state only 42 years. At six he entered the "deestric school," as it was then popularly pronounced, to learn his "ABC's" from the old blue-backed Webster speller and embark on the curriculum provided by the State laws of that day. It covered work now completed more richly in the eight grades, went through the "four sciences," namely "physiology, philosophy, botany, and zoology," and two terms of algebra. Thus equipped, he began teaching at 21 in a district school to earn money to attend Ewing College one year and the Valparaiso Normal for two years. As a teacher he fostered the "spelling bees" and "debating societies" which at night made the district school the community center for the whole family.

Then threatened tuberculosis sent him to the open air of southwest Kansas for four years. In that day because of lack of school and county medical service, children in various stages of tuberculosis and other diseases attended school so that it became a fertile breeding ground for infectious and contagious illnesses. The fact that no history of tuberculosis existed in the Davis and Allison families for eight previous generations and the children came from healthy stock and good home conditions, did not prevent his succumbing or two brothers and a sister. Communities then did not know how to prevent and fight disease.

In 1890 with health recovered he was appointed to the Indian Service as a reward for political work in Kansas, a type of reward customary under the Spoils System. When





## OUTREACHES OF THE PIONEER SPIRIT

Civil Service was introduced, among the first he took the examinations and qualified to serve the country on merit as a competent expert. From 1890 to his retirement with honorable mention in 1927, he was engaged in administrative work at the Ponca, Cheyenne, and Arapahoe Agencies of Oklahoma, served as superintendent and supreme head of the Devil's Lake Sioux Indians, the Turtle Mountain Chippewas of North Dakota, and the Rosebud Agency of South Dakota, and as Supervisor of Indian work travelled to nearly all the Indian agencies of the United States in cooperation with the Indian Bureau at Washington, where he was for a time stationed.

His most spectacular feat was single-handed to take over a reservation that only a detachment of the United States Army could govern until he came. The First World War gave him the opportunity. The Army was needed in France. He was the only man the Government dared send to take charge of the Agency near Fort Apache where for 50 years the War Department had stationed a military force to control the turbulent Indians, often on the warpath. As he travelled out to the Reservation by stage-coach, a lone civilian, he passed the Army marching to the railroad.

At this time the Apaches were making and drinking quantities of tulapi, a native-made intoxicant from corn. They fought among themselves, frequently killing each other, beating their wives, stealing horses, killing and eating the cattle given by the Government—all in all a vicious, lawless lot. Though the Government was providing a small boarding school and two rural schools, not more than one child in ten was in any school, and infrequently at that.

With astonishing audacity he organized a competent Indian police force and established a court of three Indian members with jurisdiction over local fights, family troubles, and other reservation difficulties. So well did the Indian officers enforce reservation regulations and preserve the peace, that only an occasional case of murder had to go to the Federal District Court.





## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

With equal insight he found employment for the men by establishing sawmills on the reservation to supply timber for bridges, houses, schools, and needed public buildings. His most conspicuous service was in developing a sense of ownership and pride in their live stock with the result that nomad tendencies gave way to settled agricultural responsibilities. This he accomplished by replacing the few Indian-owned old Longhorn Texas strain with horn-spread of from three to six feet. Instead, Holstein milch cows and Hereford white-faced bulls to breed up the steers and wild cows on the reservation he bought and brought in by the carload. Before he left, he was selling for the Indians from their herds \$75,000 to \$100,000 annually and still increasing their holdings—a business involving much teaching about banking.

Another step was first to see that the white men who had leased Apache grazing lands for cattle and sheep should pay the Indians not for half of the number grazed but for all, and later to refuse renewals of the leases in favor of the big growing herds of the owners. With such changes and with boarding school attendance increased from 150 to 400 and rural schools from 50 to 150, a transformation in community life took place for the better.

The *Congressional Record* carries a commendation of this work in the issue of January 12, 1928. The Hon. Louis C. Crampton, of Michigan, speaking on the floor of the House of Representatives, said:

“I came in contact while in the Southwest last fall with a man who had been nearly 40 years in the Indian Service, Mr. Charles L. Davis, the head of the White River Agency for the Apaches. These Indians have a large reservation, 1,680,000 acres, or 2,625 square miles, \$4,000,000 of timber in their forests, some undeveloped coal and iron mines and asbestos, large grazing areas, a tribal herd of 2,300 cattle, with a probable income of \$10,000 for that herd for this year, as well as herds of permittees from which they get an income of over \$30,000 for 15,000 cattle and 30,000 sheep. They derived \$156,000 from timber





## OUTREACHES OF THE PIONEER SPIRIT

last year. There are many individual Indians having a total of 21,650 head of stock from which their income this year is \$55,000.

"This will give you some idea of the responsibilities, the financial responsibilities, of such an agent. Joined to this is the tactfulness required in handling 2,000 or 3,000 temperamental individuals and taking care of them. There is an order of executive ability that is required; and what do you suppose such a man with all this responsibility upon him gets after 40 years in the service, a man who has discharged his duties in a most highly commendable fashion and in a way that would have brought him a very substantial income in private employment? As I recall, he was getting \$3,300 at the time of his retirement a few weeks ago."

Certainly such an accomplishment means just one thing: that the Indians and citizens of the United States, and consequently our Government, have all changed in their attitude toward each other!

It also meant able support by his wife, Lydia Dittes. Before marriage a teacher among the Sioux and later at the Carlisle Indian School, she had the intimate knowledge enabling her to aid her husband constructively and socially.

Of the Indians, Charles Davis writes: "Nearly all of them resisted the onrush of the pioneers, prospectors, herders, and so on, but no more than we would have done under similar circumstances. But now that those generations have passed over the Great Divide, the new generations exhibit a spirit of forgetfulness few of us could measure up to. At present, Uncle Sam has no more loyal sons and daughters than those within the several Indian reservations. At the time of the World War, many of the Indians were not citizens, hence not subject to the draft. Yet many of them went as volunteers, and the reports on their services were about universally high. Had it not been for crossing the great water, nearly all acceptable for military service would have offered themselves."





## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

In reviewing our Government's policies, ranging from crude to enlightened since the institution of the Indian Service, he writes:

"Constructive criticism is always welcomed by public servants of any great breadth of view. As we look back over the great field of endeavor, we can see many instances where better plans and policies might have been carried out. But when we study these matters in the light of the days in which they were enacted, we cannot but recognize that the service is usually worthy, although there are yet some changes requisite to get the highest and best results. Our own public standards have changed so fast it has kept many of us busy to keep up with them in our own lives."

The phrase "Indian problem" he believes to be as much a misnomer as the phrase "European problem." Few people would confuse Swede and Rumanian, German and French characteristics and problems. Yet an equal mental confusion reveals itself in lumping under the word "Indian" tribes and clans "as greatly differentiated as the several nationalities of Europe!"

All minorities in our country, whether Indian or other, he feels, arise from considerable numbers of a race congregating in communities capable of maintaining their racial customs. The solution, he says, is proper schooling, efficient social and industrial training, and above all an adequate and convincing presentation of American ideals lived out by neighbors under the great schoolmaster, Time. To Time belong not only many generations and many periods like that of 1790-1890, but the Present and the Future!

Pioneers have been needed from the time the Virginians arrived in 1608 to the present day: pioneers to establish justice between majority and minority and to win the allegiance of all to working for the ideal of national unity founded on righteousness; pioneers in human relationships! Theirs is the task of peace-makers whom One called Blessed.





## OUTREACHES OF THE PIONEER SPIRIT

### A FRONTIER ON A MOUNTAIN TOP ALABAMA—1896-1923

The Psalmist may lift up his eyes unto the hills whence cometh his help, but mountains also have a habit of isolating people by literally lifting them thousands of feet into the air, away from their fellows, and then blocking them by steep precipices and valleys from the current of life in state and nation.

Two people there were who accidentally found a lofty pine-clad skyland in Alabama. But can one ever call it "accidental" that the best-laid plans of men often go suddenly awry to make way for some undreamed and golden chain of causes and results? Both graduates of Northwestern University, and he of Garrett Biblical Seminary too, he was teaching art in Kansas Wesleyan University and turning out fine oil portraits and poems. Then his health failed. To Alabama the two wandered to find health for him. Only in a measure he found strength. But together they found something better: an opportunity to bring one of the fairest mountain sites of the state to its rightful heritage so successfully that at eighty-two Anne Davis Elder, daughter of Grasson Davis, was awarded by the *Birmingham News*, for the best civic work in Marshall County, "The Orchid of Distinction." Her dearest wish was that her partner and co-founder, Eleazer Ball Lee Elder, could have been living to share it.

Their eyes were opened to the opportunity at Boaz, on Sand Mountain, by a friend, a son, and their neighbors. Before they went to Boaz, their daughter had completed the second year at college, and one son lacked a year of entering. But how could their youngest, a boy of seven, receive an adequate education in a three-room school, open only three months of the year? Opportunely, the friend who first recommended Boaz prevailed upon them to take over the public school, Mr. Elder as principal and teacher of the high school classes, Mrs. Elder for the grades, and their





## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

daughter, Myra, for the primary. But that was not all. He suggested that they expand the three months' term to seven or nine by small tuition fees.

Naturally, however, the curriculum in the home included practical arts as well as books. The neighbors called and saw. "Won't you teach my girl to make bread?" "Won't you teach my boy how to survey?" "Won't you show me how to raise better cotton?" The pleading inquiries went on until the community discovered that what they really wanted most for their empty, inadequate lives was a modern school that offered every rightful information belonging to an American boy, girl, or adult in a democracy.

But the people could not afford such a school. True, Boaz passed as a thriving town, then, with two stores, a blacksmith shop, a railroad depot, horse-swapping day every fourth Saturday, and cotton crops credited. But they were paying their utmost for education.

Then the Church stepped in. The Alabama Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church authorized the founding of Boaz Seminary and contributed more than they could spare, small as the amount was. Then the girls stepped in. In fact, they flocked in. The first girl from the cotton fields, Anne took into her own home, unable to turn a deaf ear to the plea for opportunity. But with touching confidence in Christians to extend democratic privileges to all alike, there came four, five, and then ten and twelve to Anne's four-room home! She did not fail them. Instead, her husband devised an ingenious bed-spring in a wooden frame on hinges, folding up by day against the wall with a portiere to conceal it, and by night lowered. So many beds finally filled the room that the girls had to crawl over one bed to get into another, in order that two more girls might have an opportunity for education. Then Uncle John Snead stepped in, the owner of the house. So touched was he with the eagerness of the girls that he built several rooms onto the original four-room building, while Anne Elder wrote to friends north for contributions to help defray the expenses of the girls. So a girls' dormitory was born.





## OUTREACHES OF THE PIONEER SPIRIT

When the Elders went with their story before the Conference at the next annual session in 1899, there was long deliberation. They felt the need deeply. They had no money for buildings and equipment. What was to be done? From Anne herself came the suggestion in a stirring appeal that they send to the General Conference of the Methodist Church, soon to have its national gathering in Chicago, a delegate who could present the cause for the local Alabama Conference. To her amazement, the ministers were on their feet to make and second a motion that she be the delegate! It was triply daring. The General Conference had excluded women as delegates for years, the local Conference had no money to defray her expenses, and neither did she!

"I cannot go!" she exclaimed, struggling to her feet, she who had addressed many an audience as the personal friend of Frances E. Willard and one of the organizers of her great work. "I cannot leave home!"

But for once she did not have her husband's support. "My dear," he said, "if you refuse, there can be no education for these children. I am not well enough to travel and speak. But I can run the home and school in your absence."

She went out of the meeting in tears. But the upshot was that in the next twenty-five years in her frequent absences, Lee Elder helped run the school, kept its books, and taught Latin, Greek, and art to young ministers, often rising from a couch in an inner office to enter the outer office when necessary, always running matters efficiently and graciously, with cool, level head.

From the start the community rallied to the prospect of a real school and a real girls' dormitory. To the first acre given by Uncle Joel Morton, Mr. Robert McCleskey added ten adjoining acres towards the campus, and Uncle John Snead loaned the money to send Anne Elder to the General Conference, where she won the support of individuals, and paved the way for the sponsorship of the girls' work by the Woman's Home Missionary Society.





## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

Well she knew the need for a new schoolhouse! Through the cracks of the floor, teachers and pupils could see and count the razorback hogs, running loose in the town, as they rooted under the floor. But it was impossible to count, or even catch, the fleas which made one rise up suddenly, muttering "Gee'haud' a'fat" with precise emphasis, not to emphasize odors. Then she had a vivid memory of the bunks for girls in her own home, and of the boys, without dormitory, rising early to wind along trails by wagon, ox-team, horseback, or on foot, to reach school in time.

Simply she presented the story of the needs and possibilities and everywhere she won support from the churches where her husband had preached before teaching in college, and from women's societies and individuals. So absorbed was she in love for the people of Sand Mountain, and so fearless in her faith in God and her mission, that never did she dream, even to the end of her life, how powerful a story she told with vivid detail and sweet, kindly humor. People sat spell-bound when she spoke. In time she addressed audiences of more than a thousand with ease and freedom, and found that the world is also a woman's home. Always loyal to the community who had welcomed her family, she spoke as they would have her of opportunity and life there.

Gradually buildings arose, much of the construction by student labor, with the boys making the furniture and the girls attending to the housework. In two years the McCleskey Home for girls bore tribute to the fine woman who was the mother of Mr. Robert McCleskey and the mother-in-law of Uncle John S. Snead. With the name changed from Boaz Seminary to the John S. Snead Seminary, later in 1936 it was chartered as a Junior College when the town grew prosperous enough to support its own high school. Even before that, the School kept growing under the Elders and after they retired, until ultimately around the campus stood the administration building, well-lighted laboratories, science laboratories, boys' dormitory, Fielder Auditorium named after the first president, the Polly Lipe Hall,





## OUTREACHES OF THE PIONEER SPIRIT

gymnasium, athletic field, work shop for manual arts, and domestic science work rooms.

But bricks and brawn are only two sides of a school of which the third is brains and the fourth morale, the whole forming the foundation on which to build a personality sensitive to the finest of the world's culture, afire with the spirit of service and sacrifice, and humble enough to do whatever the hand is required to do. For all this, one source they taught: a living faith in God, overflowing into abundant life.

Writes one of her early graduates, Ethel Harpst, "The very first day I went to McCleskey, Mother Elder invited me into her room. She was sitting by an open fire, and I sat down on a footstool near her. She began to talk to me . . . I was thrilled with her personality and the charming way she told her story. Somehow as I watched the fire burn and listened, there came something into my heart, and I knew this was what I wanted to do." Today, after twenty-seven years, Miss Harpst is conducting a home which she founded for orphan and half-orphan children from the hills of northwest Georgia. Starting with a seven-room farmhouse and two acres of land, she now has several fine buildings on a seventy-acre plot, with a farm of 253 acres to raise the food for 130 children and to teach them how to manage rural matters scientifically. The dream by Mother Elder's fireplace has come true.

And so have the dreams of many of Mother Elder's girls with whom she chatted by her hearth the first day of school life, so that, though the great majority have founded their own southern homes, yet a large minority have entered all walks of life throughout the United States and have gone abroad as missionaries, as have her boys also. Though as many as 1000 girls and boys lived in her school at one time, never did she forget the personal touch, especially with girls, to whom she devoted herself particularly.

There were many who helped her. From Ohio came Anne Elder's girlhood friend, Sarah R. McDaniel, self-effacing and efficient, a beloved confidant of all. From





Boston two sisters arrived, Miss Fink and Mrs. Dobson. With their private funds they not only built and gave a model kindergarten to the School, but invested their lives to live on the campus at their own expense to teach the little ones. Lovingly they entered into the vision of what life could be in School. Most thoroughly did Anne Elder believe in good times, and most thoroughly in home life in the girls' dormitories, so that it was difficult to tell which she preferred, so enthusiastic was she in temperament in whatever she planned and did! "Mother and Father Elder had the power to make and keep a big family a real home," writes Ethel Harpst. "So rich and full were our lives with them that to share with others was the natural thing to do."

If vegetables or fruit needed to be canned from the 100-acre farm that fed the school under a competent farmer aided by the boys, then a game was made of it. As a surprise at lunch, every girl might find two pears beside her plate. These the girls would swiftly peel for canning and place on trays kitchen-bound, racing to see who would finish first and who last. The lunch had a relish such days! Or a snap-party would be announced on the front porch by moonlight. To the initiated of the domestic science department, that meant huge tubs of string beans for the boys to carry out and everyone to snap for canning more swiftly than a cloud can cross the moon. But white cotton fields shimmering under a full moon was an annual signal they awaited eagerly! Out into the cotton fields by moonlight the whole School would go with their teachers to pick cotton for wages; wages they joyously contributed to a fund to bring opportunity to others of their families and friends to attend school, or to help support one of their graduates out on the mission field.

Lots of fun, too, did the students have, raising money for their own school by concerts, pageants, dinners, or ice-cream suppers. Always Mother Elder supplied her students with the funniest stunts and most comical recitations that would throw the audience into stitches of laughter, and she herself would not hesitate to take the most humorous roles,





## OUTREACHES OF THE PIONEER SPIRIT

even if that meant singing flat, with her lovely voice, throughout a quartet selection.

Or there might be simon-pure fun, like class-day picnics on the Tennessee River, or Halloween parties, or the May Day parade with their faithful old red horse, Billie, drawing the buggy submerged in white dogwood blossoms in honor of the Queen, surrounded in state by troops in blue and white uniform marching through the town streets amid the applause of the onlookers. Anne Elder gave bread to the hungry, empty lives, but she also gave roses.

Fortunate enough never to be ill, she seemed capable of becoming a perpetual motion machine so full of vitality and good spirits that she never knew what it was to be tired. Once, only, was she slowed down, and that by a lame left knee. She consulted a doctor. He advised perfect rest and a restricted diet. She went to a chiropractor. He advised exercising the knee and massage. "Very well," she announced mischievously. "I'll follow the chiropractor's advice by day, and the doctor's by night!" She did. Occasionally she was absent-minded. Once she walked into the choir stall with her hat backwards, and almost ruined her devout husband's sermon.

When the *Birmingham News* awarded her the Orchid of Distinction for her civic work in Marshall County, the announcement stated that roads, houses, home-life, and industries had been revolutionized by the twenty-five years of that school's history. There are similar schools of which the same thing will be said tomorrow, schools like that of Ethel Harpst at Cedartown, Georgia, and of Harry Lee Upperman at Baxter, Tennessee.

But whether it is mountains to be brought low, or valleys to be exalted, rough places to be made smooth, or city streets to be widened for the boys and girls playing therein, or the desert to blossom like the rose for them, in all these places who shall find a more fruitful frontier for pioneering than the frontier of America's youth?





THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED

1940

One frontier many of the family have explored to the very boundary. But cross that boundary without reservations? "Impossible," some say.

Yet so strong is the challenge to make possible the impossible, that others have explored the parables of the lilies of the field and the birds of the air only to pronounce them literal truth! They have dared take God at His word and act on it! Just one monosyllable the world has for such unconquerable conviction—Faith. Faith that mountains of difficulties will dissolve as morning mists, for "Where God guides, He provides."

Laymen there have been in the family and ministers and missionaries who, without reservation, have pioneered in Faith. Here is what happened in America to a missionary family of the DeWitt line who, in China, embarked on the adventure.

"We've been here in a church for nearly three months after living on faith for nearly three years," writes the mother of the family. "On resigning from the Board of Foreign Missions, we felt led to be footloose. Not footloose in the sense of passive irresponsibility, of course, but of alert availability to serve as shock troops wherever spiritual needs call! And were we busy! Soul-searching interviews with those who sought us to find God's answer for their problems, team meetings with religious leaders to seek His plan for public meetings and campaigns, and so on! Throughout these three years I think we were both of us keen to try out the saying, 'Seek ye first the Kingdom . . . and all these things shall be added.'

"I, for one, thought everything would be smooth sailing all the time, and never would an occasion for jitters arise. Gradually we began to use up savings laid by. Then we just supposed God would send something to take us on from there. But He didn't. Instead, we thought of investments which had come at the time of my father's death and had





## OUTREACHES OF THE PIONEER SPIRIT

helped us out in many a pinch. These we took off ice and lived on. These gone, we began to pray for help from heaven again. None came except for small needs.

“‘How about selling our Steinway?’ we asked ourselves, bought at a flush time to fulfill a lifelong desire of mine. This thought kept recurring with the name of a certain friend. I telephoned.

“‘Why, yes, I have been considering buying one,’ came the reply. As I saw it leave the house, self-pity set in. But the thought ‘sacrifice’ came in its place. Self-pity went with the piano.

“Just as the last installment on it came, I learned that I would be compelled to have a thyroid operation. This almost completely bowled me over. The first fear that shot through my mind was ‘Where will the money come from?’ In more than two years living without income, I had begun to learn to turn things over to a Power greater than myself. I did it this time, although not easy. Hospital expenses and living expenses for the family used up that final installment.

“On the day after my return from the hospital, a check came in the mail for fifty dollars. This took care of an impending bill and left us at zero. The surgeon’s fee, of course, would be high. Did we dare face how much he would ask? Again I gave over fear and continued to be under his care as though I had a million. When we asked his fee, he evaded, saying he was not worrying about that and would let us know. He never charged a penny, and over a period of months treated me with as much care and interest as though I were his highest paying client.

“That hot summer, we came to the end of our ice-ticket book. ‘Would God really ask us to do without ice?’ I pondered. We had lived in China a good many years without it. ‘Well,’ I said ‘if that’s His plan, we’ll make the best of it.’ I gave the ice-box a thorough washing and prepared to do without it. Before long, my husband had a caller, a minister, come to pay him for preaching for him. We took ice again.





## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

"Shortly after, during weather so hot we tried living in the basement, came another ice-shortage. But Betty Ann and Jack had created some little pins out of ply-wood. Betty Ann drew them—tiny dolls, birds, deer, cocker-spaniels, and what not, and Jack sawed them out with a scroll saw. With tiny pins fastened on the back, colored, and shellacked, they made lovable ornaments. They sold among their friends nearly five dollars worth. This tided us over and supplied our ice-box again.

"Betty Ann graduated from high school in May. As summer came on, she began to talk about college. I wouldn't even entertain the hope that she could go. I just knew it was out of the question. Telling her she would have to pray about it, I was relieved to be thus rid of the matter. But she was not so easily put off. 'I believe I am to go,' she would say confidently.

"About this time my sister came to visit us. On leaving, she said, 'Betty Ann, if you are thinking about going to college this fall, I want to furnish your wardrobe for you.' Betty Ann was thrilled.

"A few days later we were invited to a friend's home to meet some missionary friends from Chile. Their son was telling about his past year at an Ohio college. 'Can this be God's plan for me?' Betty Ann asked me later. I merely laughed. It was so fantastic! We without income, and she suggesting an Ohio college! 'Well, let's ask God about it,' she persisted. The answer came to us, 'Write the Dean for information, and say she is planning to enter in the autumn.' A return letter arrived, stating entrance fees, tuition, and so on. Still I was skeptical.

"One morning a telegram came from friends just returned from China, saying they would be driving through our town on their way east. We knew them like members of our family, and were we glad! Of course, we talked China. Then they began to tell their plan to spend the year in the very town of the proposed college, so that their oldest daughter could attend! We smiled out loud and told them





## OUTREACHES OF THE PIONEER SPIRIT

about Betty Ann. 'She shall make her home with us and go to college,' they replied.

"As for tuition, it was not in sight. We had some Chinese rugs we had brought new from China. We could sell them. Weeks passed. College opening was almost here. My sister took Betty Ann to Kansas City to buy clothes. A few days later, a telegram came, making possible the sale of the rugs. Betty Ann arrived at college just a few hours before enrollment.

"Going began to get tougher at the home end. Although sums for small expenses came in as regularly as they fell due, rent began to fail. Was this a sign God had another plan for us? My husband was asked to preach in the northern end of the state the following Sunday. He went. They asked him to accept a call to the church. What were we to do? Bills were pressing. Should we go on a salary basis again? We sought His plan. He said, 'No.'

"So utterly unreasonable did this seem that we wondered if we were not wrong. I must confess that with a heavy heart for several days I asked myself, 'Can we be right?' Then my husband was asked to preach at another place. They extended a call. This time, His answer was 'Yes.' So here we are.

"In the meantime, our treasury was empty. My husband had returned without a penny for his services. Again I became desperate. But we had warmth, food, clothes, and St. Paul says we are to be content with such. But I wasn't St. Paul. I just had to wonder a bit how everything would turn out.

"We were to move at once. Since the new manse had a gas range, we did not need the one we owned. Laying before God the matter of the sale, the name of a neighbor came to us. 'Yes,' she said, 'we would like to buy it, for the one we are using is borrowed.'

"Our household goods were packed in the van, and we were making the last preparations for leaving the house. Still no money was in hand for telephone bill, water, gas, and electricity. The neighbor who was buying the stove





## THEY SAW AMERICA BORN

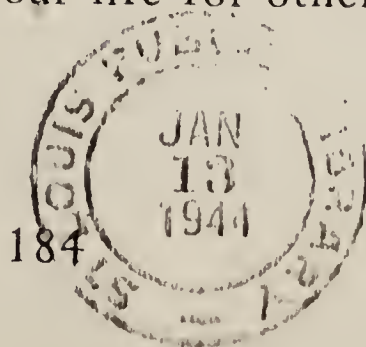
asked us to have lunch with her. 'We feel you are not asking enough for your stove,' she said. 'We believe it is worth two dollars more than your price.' So we were able to pay the incidental bills, and be off in an hour's time.

"Since coming here, things have literally been showered on us. We arrived in a snow storm. The Westminster Aid had the house freshly papered, furnace heated for a day or so in advance, and the kitchen table loaded and overflowing with canned fruits, fresh vegetables, grapefruit, puddings, pickles, and at Christmas time a turkey, capon, T-bone steaks, a fry—so much we were unable to care for it all. Then a friendly voice on the phone said, 'We have a locker at the ice-house, and thought you would perhaps like to make use of it for the meat you got at Christmas.' And so it goes!

"Since we have had a church, so many friends have written notes of congratulation and relief that we have steady employment again. When I was tidying up the kitchen shortly after we came, I thought, how many will say 'Well, they're sensible. They've taken a church at last.' But there have been a few who have said, and one of them a colored girl, 'Isn't it wonderful? What a privilege they are given to be entrusted with such testing!'"

It was St. Paul who wrote, after years of testing the possibility of living under the guidance of God, "This is our victory, even our faith!" And the conditions to be met? Spiritual laws they are, laid down in the Beatitudes. A theologian once condensed them thus: honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love, not relative and limited, but absolute and unlimited.

Such faith sounds in trumpet tones within the soul one alternative to clergy and laity alike, whether guided to a special field on faith or to a position on salary. That alternative? This! Build up your resources and individuality for yourself, or lay down your life for others? Security or risk? Self or God?





## EPILOGUE





## EPILOGUE

What are the characteristics of a "typical American pioneer" that have persisted during three hundred years of the history of America, the oldest democracy of the world? What are the typical outreaches of the pioneer spirit?

For answer, let us face another question: If Americans oppose, or try to escape, the "Total State" concept now upheld by force of arms abroad, what concepts have they presented and shall they continue to present for "Total Democracy"?

Fundamentally shall we not affirm that our ideal of "one country, indivisible, with freedom and justice for all" rests on the practical realism of spiritual values such as the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man? Shall we not say that on this rock America has built and will continue to build with helping hand outstretched to other nations who cherish this ideal, and from this rock we shall not be moved though the gates of hell open against us?

Fundamentally shall we not affirm that our principle of reverence for the unfettered mind in education is based on the realistic conviction phrased in homely fashion by our great Lincoln: "You can fool all of the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time"? Shall we not stand firm on this conviction: that intellectual light, flooding a citizenship appreciating spiritual values, will banish all darkness and illumine reason and judgment so as to establish justice and insure freedom of spirit, and from this conviction we cannot be moved?

Fundamentally shall we not affirm that in spirit and in truth we believe "in government of the people, by the people, and for the people," and pledge our lives and sacred honor that this ideal shall not perish from the earth?

Fundamentally shall we not affirm that we believe so realistically in the inherent dignity of man that we close no





## EPILOGUE

door of initiative and opportunity to any whose ideal is, not the economic and political aggrandizement of family or group, but the exaltation of the economic, social, political, and spiritual welfare of our total citizenry?

Fundamentally shall we not affirm that the pioneer spirit which founded America is a spirit of vision into the practical significance of ideals? A realistic insight into how the impossible may become possible? An overwhelming creative urge to work out without reserve the conviction of brain and heart and soul? A profound bond of companionship with one's fellow men that intuitively seeks to dream and fashion and work out together the single-stranded ideal into a more luminous concept of many minds before together executing it? A burning hope that every man shackled by tyranny from without or by cynicism from within will throw off the chains and without let or hindrance rise to the full measure of his every capability? An intuition that God Himself is a Pioneer, and those who follow Him must dare stupendously?

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